

A Democratic Defense of Universal Basic Income

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One powerful and illuminating argument animates much of Carole Pateman's remarkably diverse work on democracy, participation, political obligation, social contract, feminism and feminist interpretation, and the welfare state: subordination and democratic citizenship are incompatible. To my mind, her particular genius has been to show how social institutions and relationships, from marriage to the capitalist organization of production, make some individuals dependent upon others; to demonstrate that such relationships pervade our political theories and our societies; and, to argue forcefully for a deep democratization that would transform our theory and our practice and make us more free. Seen in light of this overarching concern, Pateman's recent interest in proposals for a basic income represents a seamless continuation of her scholarly endeavors (see Pateman 2004, 90).

A basic income (BI) is an unconditional social transfer set at a level that assures every citizen subsistence. It is payable to all individuals regardless of their economic means, family or employment status, willingness to seek paid work or accept jobs, or any other status or requirement (Purdy 1994, 33; cf. Parijs 1995). In short, BI makes guaranteed subsistence a core entitlement of citizenship. Proposals for BI have a long intellectual history (see Dowling, Wispelaere, and White 2003; Parijs 2004; Rothschild 2001); they have recently attracted considerable interest in response to grave concerns about the social, economic, and political viability of the welfare state in the age of neoliberal globalization (Offe 1992; Standing 1992).

Although this contemporary discussion of BI began as one about policy reforms that might enhance distributive efficiency, reduce poverty, and shore up the political foundations of the welfare state, the debate has largely come

to be framed by considerations of social justice. Liberals (White 2003), libertarians (Steiner 1992; Parijs 1995), egalitarians (Baker 1992), and communarians (Jordan 1992) have all offered justifications for variants of BI.¹ The duties and obligations of citizenship figure prominently in this discussion, with concerns about reciprocity and free-riding at the forefront. Such concerns explain in part why some commentators favor a scheme of basic capital over BI (e.g., Ackerman and Alstott 1999; Ackerman 2003) and why other supporters advocate imposing conditions on recipients of BI, such as willingness to work or to make a productive contribution to society (e.g., Atkinson 1996; Dore 2001; Goodin 2001; Phelps 2001; White 2003).

Carole Pateman's distinctive and characteristic contribution to the BI debate has been to demonstrate that its terms are deeply flawed. Contemporary treatments of social justice usually operate independently of specifically democratic inquiry and adopt peculiarly economistic concepts and theories (Pateman 2004, 91–92). By conceiving freedom and reciprocity in a narrowly economic way; by ignoring feminist insights about the interdependence of work, welfare, and citizenship; and, by missing or misapprehending the relationship between freedom and institutional structure, advocates and critics of BI alike have neglected its potential contribution to democratization (Pateman 1998, 2003, 2004). That contribution consists in the crucial role that a properly conceived and designed BI can play in ensuring that all people “live within democratic authority structures that enhance their autonomy, and that they have the *standing*, and are able (have the opportunities and the means) to enjoy and safeguard their freedom” (Pateman 2004, 91). Put succinctly, Pateman's argument is that a BI could significantly further democratization but that it will be unlikely to do so unless we articulate and defend explicitly *democratic* arguments for it—arguments that include an insistence on its unconditionality. Following this suggestion, I intend to sketch a democratic justification for a universal basic income here. This justification differs in some respects from the one toward which Pateman has gestured, in particular in its global application, yet it is inspired by the central insights of her work: the close connection between freedom and democratization; the role of social relationships and institutions in structuring and perpetuating subordination; and, the use of feminist analysis to inform our understanding of what genuine freedom requires.

The chapter is divided into four sections. In the first I briefly survey the

1. See also White 2003, chap. 1. for a related discussion of theories of economic citizenship.

tradition of emancipatory democratic theory that emphasizes rights to economic independence in securing and enjoying political freedom. In the second section I provide an overview of an account of democracy I call *democracy as human rights*. This account reinterprets democracy's core principles of freedom and equality in terms of human rights, an interpretation grounded in the emancipatory democratic tradition and motivated by globalization's challenge for democracy. On this account, democracy is defined as the political commitment to universal emancipation through securing the equal enjoyment of fundamental human rights for everyone. The idea of emancipation, which encompasses noninterference and nondomination in all domains of social life, captures the crucial role that relationships and institutions play in determining freedom. In the third section I demonstrate that securing the equal enjoyment of fundamental rights for everyone can best be achieved through a framework of social policies and institutions that includes BI. In the final section I argue that a democratic BI must be universal—that it must function globally. Not only is this universal scope entailed by the global character of democracy as human rights, it is, perhaps counterintuitively, vital to its practical success.

Two questions typically asked of any BI proposal are “is it desirable?” and “is it feasible?” Separating these questions suggests that even if BI proposals are found desirable on democratic or other grounds, doubts about feasibility—ranging from cost considerations to political calculations—might ultimately sink them (Solow 2001, ix). Although I will briefly discuss these practical challenges below, I want to try to frame these objections before proceeding. What BI might cost and how it might be funded and implemented are certainly important questions, yet whether we think BI is worth the cost depends in large part on the nature and the appeal of the arguments we provide. If we conclude that BI is necessary for democracy, our assessment of its costs will be radically different than if we conceive it merely as an alternative welfare policy. Similarly, whether BI can command a popular consensus cannot be considered independently of the reasons we give for supporting it. Those reasons are my subject here, and my primary concern is to show that democracy (or one interpretation of it) *requires* BI.

Freedom, Equality, and Emancipation in the Democratic Tradition

Democracy as human rights (DHR) is a reinterpretation of core democratic principles of universal freedom and equality worked out in response to the

challenges globalization poses for democracy. This means it is concerned with how to realize freedom and equality not just in the traditional political sphere but in all sorts of domains where democracy is not usually thought to obtain, from the household to supranational economic management. This is one way in which DHR speaks to and extends Pateman's democratic vision. Before outlining this reinterpretation I briefly address its place within the democratic tradition; situating DHR in this way highlights its *democratic* character.

DHR belongs to an emancipatory democratic tradition that is frequently overlooked in a climate dominated by political liberalism. It is anchored in two core democratic principles, freedom and equality, that give democratization theories their distinctive leveling power. "Men being . . . by Nature, all free, equal and independent," Locke wrote, "no one can be put out of this Estate, and subjected to the Political Power of another, without his own *Consent*" (Locke 1960, II sec. 95). The simple premise that all men are free and equal undermines justifications for natural authority and subjection; as Pateman (1988, 39–40) argues, "the doctrine of natural individual freedom and equality was revolutionary precisely because it swept away, in one fell swoop, all the grounds through which the subordination of some individuals, groups or categories of people to others had been justified."

Freedom and equality thus ensure that there is no arbitrary rule, no domination or unwarranted interference, no government without consent. From the time of the Levellers and Locke, and certainly by the French Revolution, freedom, equality, and emancipation were being expressed in the language of natural or universal human rights (Soboul 1977, 160–61).² The French *Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen* established an ideal, a "direction of intention" that shaped the evolution of liberal and social democracy (Lefebvre 1957, 184). Although the doctrine was only partially realized in the eighteenth century—and remains only partially realized today—its implacable emancipatory logic was apprehended by women and men of the time (Hunt 2000, 12). From the beginning, democratization theorists of various stripes recognized the role of economic independence in achieving emancipation and realizing democracy and human rights for all. Rousseau, Paine, Wollstonecraft, Mill, Stanton, and others saw that without economic independence one cannot be free. Reliance on another for one's subsistence—as a spouse, a child,

2. The idea of natural rights meant, for many theorists, simply that everyone was born with them; here, that freedom and equality are natural or innate qualities characteristic of all people. This premise is best regarded as a political principle, not as a foundational or metaphysical claim: universality was a necessary feature of the leveling or democratizing arguments in which these principles were employed.

an employee—puts one in a state of dependence that many of these theorists viewed as equivalent to slavery and incompatible with citizenship. Thus, at least since the eighteenth century, democratic theorists have explicitly recognized the links between a right to one's subsistence and political freedom in achieving emancipation. And at least since that time they have theorized that link in terms of human rights.³

While democratic and feminist theorists, including Pateman, have exposed and interrogated the deep links between citizenship and independence, the rights-based tradition of emancipatory democratic thinking has been largely overlooked, for a combination of reasons. Historically, liberalism captured the discourse of rights and stripped it of its economic and egalitarian thrust. Today almost any discussion of rights is categorized as “liberal,” even though democratization theorists have seen rights as the leading edge of a leveling and emancipatory program of social and political reform for centuries. Democracy in the classical liberal tradition is typically reduced to a political method, and rights are conceived as civil and political rights—with the effect that domination outside the political sphere becomes essentially invisible. Classical liberals and libertarians remain skeptical of too much democracy; they insist on a distinction between civil/political rights (including property rights), which they conceive as natural or as byproducts of self-ownership, and economic rights, which they dismiss as illegitimate. Rawlsian liberals accept the importance of economic well-being but tend to treat it as a matter of social justice rather than rights or democracy. Socialists have emphasized the material preconditions of effective freedom but have dismissed the language of rights (and sometimes of democracy), mistaking Marx's historically situated critique of bourgeois rights for a timeless general indictment of human rights. Many contemporary human rights theorists recognize the interdependence of political and economic rights (e.g., Pogge 2000; Donnelly 2003) but rarely conceive their arguments as democratic (and often remain wary of democracy; see Donnelly 2003, 199ff.; cf. Freeman 2000). So democratic theory today mainly concerns participation in collective decision making and the electoral process with an emphasis on deliberation and the requirements of inclusive discourse, which are commonly regarded as coextensive with the requirements of freedom and equality (e.g., Bohman 1997).

3. This view differs from traditional republicanism, which treated independence as a precondition for citizenship rather than a political objective and which relied on a masculine, militaristic, and thus highly exclusive, ideal of civic virtue. Some recent republican revivalists (e.g., Pettit 1997; Skinner 1998) have advanced more inclusive versions of the idea, but the democratic form remains distinctive in its emphasis on universal human rights.

DHR attempts to revitalize the emancipatory democratic tradition, emphasizing the centrality of economic independence to political freedom and reclaiming human rights as a conceptual vocabulary for democratization. The democratic political method is essential to this emancipatory program—it protects people from arbitrary rule—but it does not exhaust it. Democracy also requires substantive freedoms, including the right to subsistence; these substantive freedoms, as well as a democratic political framework, are necessary for achieving emancipation.

Democracy as Human Rights

DHR represents a *political commitment to universal emancipation through securing the equal enjoyment of fundamental human rights for everyone*.⁴ I shall proceed in explicating DHR by elaborating upon elements of this definition. Once its basic premises have been fully explained, I show how DHR implies a concern with governance that facilitates democracy's horizontal and vertical extension—that is, how it expands democracy's scope to encompass many domains of social relations and its reach from local through global systems of interaction.

DHR is a political commitment to *universal emancipation*. Emancipation evokes release from subjection or slavery; it denotes both nonsubjection and the *act* of freeing or winning release from subjection. More recently the idea has come to include progressive struggles to transform society, a usage linking emancipation with left or progressive politics and with efforts to remake the social, economic, and political order (Booth 1999, 40–41). These two aspects of emancipation are closely related: creating a new and more just social order often entails eliminating structures of oppression and domination. In this sense emancipation is also closely connected with democratization. DHR restores emancipation to a central place within democratic thinking (thus breaking the recent monopolization of the language of nondomination by republican revivalists (Pettit 1997; Skinner 1998; cf. Gould 1988, 1993). In DHR both dependence and unwarranted interference create subjection; an adequate account of democratic emancipation must take both into account (see Wall 2001).⁵ As Shapiro (1999, 30) argues, “democracy is as much about opposition to the arbitrary exercise of power as it is about collective self-govern-

4. For a more complete elaboration and defense of DHR, see Goodhart 2005.

5. Hereafter I shall use *subjection* to refer to a condition of being dominated and/or experiencing unwarranted interference or coercion from another or others.

ment,” even though this oppositional aspect of democracy is not frequently mentioned in the academic literature. In fact, one can think about self-government in the democratic tradition as instrumental in securing emancipation. Self-government is an indispensable mechanism for reining in the power of government and defending one’s rights. The commitment to *universal* emancipation simply emphasizes that DHR applies and is open to all.

DHR seeks to realize emancipation through securing fundamental human rights for everyone. Fundamental rights are all those rights needed to eliminate subjection—the set of rights that when realized together constitute emancipation. Following Shue (1996), I conceive the relationship among basic or fundamental rights as one of indivisibility and interdependence: enjoyment of each is a necessary condition for the enjoyment of all the others. Unless each fundamental right is secure, none is; unless all the fundamental rights are secure, emancipation is not achieved. DHR thus deepens the idea of fundamental rights in an important way: it reconceives a purely formal right as one *through which* emancipation is secured by the equal enjoyment of human rights for everyone. This commitment to emancipation through human rights recognizes that when people are deprived of any fundamental right they become open to the arbitrary will or actions of another person, of the state, of a corporation, or of some other actor. So fundamental rights guarantee emancipation by protecting against potential subjection. “Potential” is an important modifier here: the threat of domination or the availability of means for interfering with people’s rights themselves constitute forms of subjection that democracy must not tolerate. Emancipation is thus defined by the secure enjoyment of all the fundamental human rights, linking democracy’s commitment to freedom and equality for all with the specific guarantee of fundamental human rights. These rights become central to democracy’s meaning on this interpretation, as they were historically for emancipatory theorists of democratization.

There are four main groups or clusters of fundamental human rights.⁶ Rights relating to *liberty and security* concern the physical safety and integrity of individuals, their freedom of activity, choice, and movement, and their right to noninterference in matters of personal or intimate concern. Rights concerning *fairness* entitle people to equal treatment before the law and in politics and society. These rights include guarantees concerning legal and criminal procedure (e.g., due process), and equal access to public benefits and

6. I borrow the term “clusters” from Held 1995, who uses it to denote bundles of rights associated with sites of power in modern societies; for a classification similar to mine see Beitz 2001.

services. Rights essential to an *adequate standard of living* concern the satisfaction of basic needs and the conditions in which one works and lives. These rights include such things as a guarantee of subsistence (food, shelter), access to health care, a decent education, choice in family and relationship status, and rights to enjoy and participate in cultural life. Finally, *civil and political rights* encompass rights and guarantees concerning one's social and political activities. These include freedoms of assembly, conscience, and expression, a right to choose one's own lifestyle, and rights to political participation. Nothing in the theory rides on the classification of any particular right or on the names assigned to the categories, however; grouping the rights into clusters simply makes it easier to talk about them in general terms.⁷

The goal of emancipation and the interdependence of fundamental rights together constitute a test or threshold for whether any particular right should be considered fundamental. We can work out a conception of fundamental rights analytically, but the ultimate test of its adequacy is whether guaranteeing the rights it specifies actually results in emancipation. Put differently, we can check the analytic account's adequacy by seeing whether realizing the rights it specifies actually constitutes emancipation.⁸ Thus the category of fundamental rights, while clearly defined and expansive, is also provisional and self-limiting. Defining fundamental rights this way points toward a possible solution to one of the thorniest problems in debates over human rights, that of differing cultural understandings of rights. Even human rights universalists (e.g., Donnelly 1999) accept that universal rights must be interpreted in varying cultures and contexts. The difficulty has been in determining what constitutes a reasonable or legitimate interpretation of a given right. DHR suggests an appropriate criterion: all fundamental rights must be defined and secured in such a way that they actually constitute emancipation. Take the right to expression: certain limits on Nazi propaganda in Germany or on incitement to ethnic violence in deeply divided societies do not seem like unreasonable limits on expression; bans on opposition political parties or on criticism of government policies that favor certain ethnic groups while disadvantaging others clearly cross the line. The distinction lies in whether the restrictions limit expression so severely that other rights are jeopardized.

7. I leave out so-called "group rights" because I am persuaded by Jones 1999 that in many cases these are best understood as rights held by members of groups qua individuals; rights to enjoy and participate in a culture, for example, can be conceived in this way. Rights whose subjects are groups are problematic from a democratic perspective.

8. If the account proves inadequate in practice, it might be because some rights are omitted or because recognized rights are not adequately specified.

Fundamental rights do not comprise the full range of rights people might enjoy, nor do they guarantee people a life that is substantively “good.” Common objections to rights-based theories include charges of inattention to effective freedom and of excessive and destructive individualism. Charges of the first type typically associate rights with negative liberties and then show that negative liberties alone cannot ensure that we are free to become who we would like to be or really are (e.g., Taylor 1997). DHR is immune to charges of this kind; its emphasis on rights to an adequate standard of living, in particular, means that it goes well beyond the standard formulations of negative rights, as it must do to ensure emancipation. That said, DHR certainly falls short of many idealizations of the good life; one might enjoy all of one’s fundamental rights and still not be happy or free in the positive sense invoked by Taylor and many others. I see this as an advantage of DHR; unlike theories that specify primary goods (Rawls 1971), essential human functions or capabilities (Nussbaum 1992), or accounts of flourishing (Brugger 1996), DHR avoids controversial claims about what constitutes the good life. Of course, the commitment to freedom and equality, as interpreted through DHR, is a substantive one that will itself be controversial. The paths and projects available to individuals and communities are limited by the obligations of reciprocal recognition of others as free and equal beings. Yet such recognition, while demanding, is still less demanding and certainly less controversial than any claims about what constitutes the good life might be globally. To take a position on such matters seems to me inappropriate for a cosmopolitan theory and unnecessary for a democratic one.

The second charge, of excessive or destructive individualism, is usually directed against liberal theories of rights and autonomy (e.g., Pollis and Schwab 1979; Barber 1984; Kausikan 1993; Sandel 1998). DHR reflects a shared commitment to emancipation, a commitment reflected in social guarantees of fundamental rights (see below). This shared democratic commitment constitutes a kind of community in itself, one in which political care is expressed through reciprocal recognition of others as free and equal, through social guarantees of rights, and through the concern those rights express for others (Gould 1993, 409). Second, because DHR privileges no substantive conception of the good life, it leaves open to people the chance to pursue, collectively or individually, those forms of it which they find most appealing. Of course, “some conceptions of rights are incompatible with some conceptions of community. . . . Likewise, some conceptions of community . . . do not recognize individuals as beings with rights. But not all conceptions of rights are at odds with all notions of community” (Jones 1994, 210–11). Democracy certainly rules out

some kinds of group or community practices, but it is a mistake to create a false dichotomy between individuals and communities; neither can exist without the other. In fact, the point of rights is to provide for human interaction (Jones 1994, 211), to define in part how and on what terms community is possible. Rights themselves can form part of a broad and appealing definition of the community and its values (Habermas 2001). These two observations show the wisdom of LeFort's (1986) claim that human rights are generative of democracy and that their effectiveness is linked to our allegiance to them as a certain way of being in society.

DHR requires securing the enjoyment of all fundamental rights for everyone so that everyone will be free from subjection. Securing a right means providing social guarantees for its enjoyment. Shue (1996, 16) argues that a social guarantee implies correlative duties associated with rights: "a right is ordinarily a justified demand that some other people make some arrangements so that one will still be able to enjoy the substance of the right even if—actually *especially* if—it is not within one's own power to arrange on one's own to enjoy the substance of the right. It is not enough," he adds, "that at the moment it happens that no one is violating the right" (cf. Vincent 1986). These duties and obligations need not be assigned to particular individuals, however: they are shared responsibilities to be met through the design of proper social institutions. An institutionally grounded approach to human rights is thus required by the duties correlated with basic rights and by the need for viable and effective social guarantees of those rights (Pogge 1992; Shue 1996).

For a right to be secured its actual enjoyment must be socially guaranteed against standard threats (Shue 1996, 13). We can specify three conditions that must be part of such a social guarantee: first, the right in question must be generally recognized and understood. Second, the standard threats to the right must be identified and means of addressing those threats devised. Finally, those means must be incorporated into legal and social institutions that are adequately empowered to actually check the threats; they must be fully funded, must have the appropriate jurisdiction, and so on. Simply signing on to international conventions or placing laws on the books are not in themselves enough—though both can obviously be a great help. To secure fundamental rights three types of institution are necessary: representative political institutions; direct functional institutions like schools, police, and social welfare agencies whose work contributes directly to implementing specific rights; and indirect functional institutions, which are charged with policy, oversight,

and enforcement functions.⁹ DHR also requires that all of these democratic institutions adopt and implement procedures that follow fairly straightforwardly from respect for fundamental human rights (I elaborate on these procedures in Goodhart 2005).

Achieving emancipation for everyone implies a general concern with governance. Governance is a more encompassing term than government; it is sometimes referred to as “government-like” activity, especially in the supranational domain, where authority is exercised in international or transnational space in the absence of sovereign governments (Finkelstein 1995, 368). I shall use “governance” to mean any system of rule characterized by the goal-oriented exercise of control in any sphere of human activity (cf. Rosenau 1992, 15).

Focusing on governance proves particularly congenial to DHR’s emancipatory project because governance encompasses systems of rule in diverse domains of human interaction. The commitment to securing emancipation means that DHR must be concerned with structures of unfreedom wherever they occur. Governance is necessary whenever and wherever common ends and interests require cooperation and interaction among groups and individuals. Because rule involves the exercise of control, power, and coercion, however, it creates conditions in which there exists a significant threat of subjection. Since governance occurs in all kinds of social activities and interactions, subjection often originates in domains outside the narrowly conceived public realm of traditional democratic theory; indeed, the fundamental interdependence of social life makes compartmentalizing different systems of rule into separate spheres or domains arbitrary and undesirable from a democratic point of view. DHR recognizes the analytic value of such conceptual boundaries but denies their political salience; it treats the fundamental interdependence of social life as a fact demanding an integrated and comprehensive democratic response.

While subjection can occur wherever governance transpires, it takes different forms within different systems of rule, each requiring appropriate responses. DHR is well suited to this complex challenge for several reasons. First, it provides a single normative framework that integrates democratic responses across many domains of governance. Democracy requires that all governance activities respect and conform with the requirements of funda-

9. Many of these institutions help with the vertical or supranational extension of democracy; unfortunately, space constraints prevent me from discussing these here. See Goodhart 2005.

mental human rights. Democracy thus means the same thing in the state, the family, the economy, and in civil society; one standard of democratic legitimacy applies consistently in all domains. Another advantage of DHR is that this uniformity does not dictate institutional similarity across domains. DHR is concerned with an end, emancipation, and is not wedded to any particular institutional method or procedure for ensuring it. Of course, certain institutions are more democratic than others, precisely because they are instrumental in securing fundamental human rights; representative political institutions are a clear example. But many rights can be secured differently in different contexts. Because DHR is not defined exclusively in terms of a particular political method, it allows a great deal of flexibility in the pursuit of democratic aims.

A Democratic Justification of Basic Income

DHR makes the central role of a democratic right to subsistence clear. Economic independence is a key component in securing political freedom and equality and realizing emancipation. Without a guaranteed subsistence, other fundamental rights become insecure. The rights to education, to political participation, to personal security, freedom of expression, and personal choice or autonomy are all compromised by economic dependence. In addition, economically dependent individuals are open to potential domination by those upon whom they count for their subsistence: spouses, employers, aid workers, and governmental agencies and bureaucrats, for example.¹⁰ DHR requires securing a right to subsistence for everyone, unconditionally, against standard threats; BI is the best way to guarantee this right.

Among the standard threats to economic independence in the more developed countries today are unemployment, underemployment, or unsafe or degrading work; changes in relationship status or the need to remain in unsafe or degrading relationships; serious illness or long term disability; and simple bad luck. From a democratic perspective, one emphasizing emancipation, BI has several distinct advantages over other social welfare schemes in addressing these threats. First, it provides maximum flexibility for individuals to change jobs, retrain, take lower-paying or part-time work, or to leave paid employment altogether. Second, it frees individuals—especially women—from the economic need to remain in unsafe, abusive, or demeaning relationships

10. The difficult question of children, whose dependence on their parents goes well beyond economic need, lies beyond my scope here.

(Pateman 2003, 2004). Third, it provides the most efficient scheme of social insurance against misfortune (Goodin 1992), economic or otherwise, by ensuring that no one falls below the level of subsistence. In developing countries the threats are somewhat different and arguably more severe: grinding poverty, often coupled with political and extrapolitical oppression and exploitation; health crises like AIDS; precarious access to food and water, and so on. Still, BI can provide an important part of an effective solution to these threats when used in conjunction with sensible development policies and democratic political reform, as I discuss briefly below.

BI has another important advantage over alternative means of institutionalizing guarantees for subsistence: its unconditionality. This feature of BI prevents benefits being manipulated as tools of domination. At present, means tests, lifestyle tests, assessments of “desert” or willingness to work, and other welfare requirements in developed countries create the possibility for recipients to be dominated by those who make decisions about the conditions attached to benefits (Fitzpatrick 2000, chap. 8; Handler 2004). These decision-makers might be aid or social workers, bureaucrats, politicians, or electoral coalitions who use their control over necessary resources to coerce or influence potential recipients (cf. Barry 1996). In developing countries, aid is too frequently linked to social and political connections or to support for the ruling party. In all these cases, the contingency of conditional benefits violates DHR’s requirement that fundamental rights be secured against all standard threats. Precisely because such contingency can easily be and has in fact been translated into domination, DHR requires an unconditional guarantee of subsistence for everyone. BI is preferable to other schemes both because of its unconditionality and because it entails the minimum amount of interference in people’s lives—it is “minimally presumptuous” (Goodin 1992) as well as minimally coercive.

BI is one pillar in the broader structure of social guarantees necessary to secure fundamental rights to an adequate standard of living. Among the other important pillars of this democratic social edifice are effective public education and public health systems (including guaranteed health care for all), effective workers’ rights, and transparent, accountable, and participatory systems of governance. BI is crucial, again, because it provides a guarantee of economic independence that satisfies a long-recognized requirement of emancipation. I should emphasize again that to adequately safeguard this right BI should be set at subsistence; otherwise economic independence is not assured, other fundamental rights are endangered, and emancipation is undermined. This requirement has important implications for debates about the gradual

introduction of a BI program, suggesting that a “full” BI for the most vulnerable members of society might be preferable on democratic grounds to a partial BI for everyone.

It is clear that only a BI set at subsistence level provides a satisfactory social guarantee of economic independence. Yet it might seem that certain conditions—particularly those associated with a “participation income” (Atkinson 1996; Goodin 2001) or a “reciprocal contribution” (White 2003, 131–38)—would be unobjectionable from a democratic perspective. After all, what White defines as a right to “reasonable access” to a minimum income is not equivalent to the right to be given an income without conditions. In particular, conditions designed to increase people’s contributions to society through community service of some kind might appear to be beneficial to democracy. DHR certainly endorses a participatory social framework encouraging voluntarism, engagement in politics or community service, and other community contributions (see Veen 1998, 160). But to make guarantees of subsistence contingent upon such contributions would undermine the secure guarantee of this right, reintroducing conditions for potential subjection. A requirement of this kind would create a distinction between those who have to fulfill certain societal demands to realize their political freedom and those who are under no such obligation. Further, such requirements would undermine the advantages that BI provides for those who elect not to engage in paid employment, a crucial aspect of political freedom (Parijs 1992; Standing 1992; Parijs 1995; Veen 1998) especially for women (Standing 1992; Alstott 2001; Pateman 2003, 2004). Moreover, conditionality would invite domination and coercion through those measures necessary to assess and verify contributions, undermining economic independence and thus threatening other fundamental rights as well. As Pateman (2004, 93–94) has argued, a conditional BI is a privilege rather than a democratic right. Linking BI to a reciprocal contribution is like linking suffrage or free expression to a similar requirement; haggling for such rights in a democratic society is absurd.

This democratic defense of BI is, I think, broadly consistent with the arguments Pateman has offered for preferring BI to citizens’ grants and other similar schemes. Rather than emphasize self-governance, as Pateman does, DHR stresses emancipation; this difference originates in my wish to avoid certain global implications of “self-government” arguments, but at the individual level self-government as Pateman uses it and emancipation as defined here seem functionally equivalent. The other significant difference between Pateman’s views and my own concerns the universal application of BI, a question she has not directly addressed and to which I now turn.

Universal Basic Income

DHR is a universal theory: it seeks to achieve emancipation for everyone. This makes it necessarily a global theory, one well suited to addressing the challenges globalization poses for democracy. DHR conceives of global democracy as part of a general requirement to democratize all structures or systems of governance. Globalization occasions the reassessment of whether and how democracy meets its universal commitments, but it is those commitments that animate the theory's vertical and horizontal extensions of democracy.

Because of its universality, DHR makes no distinctions with respect to the origin of threats to rights or the physical or political location of the subjects of those threats; likewise, it makes no allowances based upon the systems of governance within which the threats arise. Democrats should be equally concerned with the activities of state and municipal governments, of international governance organizations (IGOs), clubs, families, schools, churches, local businesses, and transnational corporations (TNCs). Democratization, as it is conceived through DHR, requires extending the social guarantees of fundamental human rights beyond the boundaries of the political as it has traditionally been understood to encompass all those domains where governance occurs and where domination and unwarranted interference are therefore likely. DHR's analytic and critical focus on governance facilitates democracy's extension into the family, the workplace, and civil society as well as into the supranational domains of globalization.

In DHR the same basic logic applies to democratization within the state and beyond it: effective social guarantees for fundamental rights must be institutionalized as a means of eliminating subjection and securing emancipation for all. Standard threats to fundamental human rights, whether posed by state governments, IGOs, TNCs, or any other actors must be neutralized by effective institutions. Whether societies were ever sufficiently well contained to guarantee fundamental rights against "outside" threats is doubtful. Today, however, there is no doubt: states cannot adequately secure citizens' rights in an interdependent world. This means (in part) extending institutional guarantees for fundamental human rights into supranational domains not typically associated with democratic politics. This requirement establishes demanding criteria for the validity of borders and boundaries: no borders can justify or excuse violations of fundamental rights. No territory, no conceptual domain, no group, class, or category, can be excluded from democracy's guarantees and requirements.

Under this interpretation, familiar elements of modern democracy—states,

exclusive citizenship, popular rule over a homeland—must be thoroughly reconsidered. Similarly, routine acceptance that different norms govern social activity and interaction in the home or the workplace, on this side of the river or that one, on this continent or another, must be abandoned. Among the limits DHR will have to overcome are the ethical and psychological limits that confine our conceptions of democracy to our country, to fellow citizens, to the public sphere—in short, to the familiar boundaries of the political. DHR does not require the elimination of boundaries or differences; it recognizes that boundaries sustain important aspects of community in many ways. But it also recognizes that such boundaries can sustain domination and oppression. Thus DHR requires that boundaries not interfere with human emancipation. As I indicated above, many of DHR’s guarantees will be provided through indirect functional institutions, multilateral agencies working in conjunction with direct local participatory and political institutions to protect and promote fundamental human rights.

Here I want to focus on the requirement for a universal basic income (UBI).¹¹ Strangely, even many proponents of an otherwise unconditional BI tacitly or explicitly endorse its restriction to citizens or residents (see Jordan 1992, 165; Purdy 1994, 38; Parijs 1995; Barry 1996, 247ff.; cf. Barry 1998, 153). Yet, as Fabre (2003, 123) notes, “any proposal which regards membership as the basis for distribution . . . needs to account for the relationship between our obligations to fellow members and our obligations to foreigners.” From the perspective developed here, it is uncertain how conditions of geographical location or citizenship would be any more legitimate as objections to fundamental rights than requirements to work or to adopt a bureaucratically preferred lifestyle. From the foregoing account of DHR’s global implications, its requirement for a UBI follows straightforwardly. Borders and other boundaries should not affect the requirements of democracy on this account; universal emancipation requires that everyone’s fundamental rights be secured. This position is similar to that taken by left-libertarian advocates of BI (Steiner 1992; Parijs 1995; cf. Purdy 1994, 37). The similarity is not surprising: classical libertarianism, like DHR, begins from an assumption of the natural (universal) freedom and equality of all people (as well as from the democratically problematic assumption of self-ownership; see Pateman 2002). UBI need not be set at a uniform level; it must uniformly be adequate to guarantee subsistence. What suffices for this purpose will vary with local conditions.¹²

11. Some commentators use UBI to refer to a basic income without conditions. In the terminology I have adopted here, that usage is redundant. I use UBI exclusively to refer to a *global* basic income scheme.

12. Barry 1996 (249) sensibly proposes setting UBI levels based on purchasing power.

In lieu of a conclusion, I want to consider briefly some likely objections to UBI and some strengths attributable to its global reach. BI proposals are quite controversial; UBI can hardly fail to be even more controversial. Perhaps counter-intuitively, however, in at least one important way a UBI might be more practical than the territorially conditional alternative. One common objection to BI schemes is that they will touch off massive immigration as people move to take advantage of the program. UBI might significantly blunt this effect, anticipated variations in levels of benefit notwithstanding. Evidence from studies of migration suggests that mobility is more sensitive to absolute levels of income and welfare in the state of origin than it is to differentials between states (Arango 2000, 286–87). So a UBI might actually help to stabilize migration by reducing the need to move to secure one’s subsistence.¹³ There are numerous pragmatic reasons why primary responsibility for social welfare provision lies with states; these reasons are not incompatible with global moral obligations, but they do entail that when states are unwilling or unable to fulfill these responsibilities, the obligations of the wider global community kick in (Goodin 1988). For the wealthier countries, BI can and should be funded domestically; in developing countries, there might well be an immediate need for global assistance.

Funding for a UBI is another likely objection, given the prominent cost objections raised against BI in the domestic context. Assessing the costs of BI is difficult; its effects on incomes, on economic output, and on labor force participation, for example, are difficult to anticipate in advance. Much also hinges on subtle details of the program’s design. Moreover, as mentioned at the outset, our evaluation of the program’s cost depends in part on our reasons for supporting it. Put differently, the question is less one of affordability than of what price we are willing to pay. An adequate treatment of these issues is impossible here; instead, I want to identify three key points central to the debates over UBI’s cost. First, BI is often conceived of as a welfare or poverty-reduction program. Treating it this way centers the debate on comparisons of its costs with those of existing programs. Conceiving BI as a democratic entitlement changes this perspective, demonstrating the often-hidden political costs—the costs measured in terms of domination and unwarranted interference—incurred under existing arrangements. BI costs more and delivers more; the value of what it delivers is ultimately a measure of our political commitments. Second, the democratic, universal justification of BI reminds

13. DHR might further suppress politically driven migration by its extension of fundamental rights.

us that the costs of global poverty—violence, disease, migration, instability, and the resources (including military expenditures) expended to manage them—are staggering. Investing in democracy globally makes good political and, in the long run, economic sense. Third, most BI proposals rely on income taxes as sources of revenue. UBI might entail some international redistribution, but it also provides an opportunity to wed social guarantees with other policy objectives through revenue-generating mechanisms. One attractive possibility is taxation of “bads” rather than goods like income or tradable items (Robertson 1996; cf. Purdy 1994, 44; Barry 1996, 242–43). Such taxable “bads” include pollution (taxes on carbon emissions, chemicals), financial speculation (Tobin tax), and weapons sales, to name a few. Global authorities like the UN or the IMF might administer the collection of revenues and distribution of funds in coordination with states.

With respect to feasibility, it should be stressed that there might be good reasons for proponents of economic globalization to support UBI. It offers a simple, concrete, and effective response to many of the ills commonly attributed to economic globalization. It is thus consistent with calls to reform globalization, to give it a human or humane face, or, as I would prefer, to democratize it. If globalization is to truly make everyone better off, as its most ardent defenders insist it can, social institutions must be designed to ensure that the gains from trade and integration do in fact benefit everyone. A UBI is one way to deliver on that promise. One of the principal objections to IMF-backed structural adjustment programs promoting long-term economic development is their high short-term costs in terms of human welfare. The “shock therapy” administered by governments following IMF guidelines often entails reductions in social spending on education, health care, and income support schemes for the worst-off, cuts that not only harm but often alienate and radicalize already marginalized members society. Implementation of UBI would in effect “embed liberalism” globally, cushioning the blows of productive forces reshaping the global economy and contributing to human security and geopolitical stability (cf. Ruggie 1982).

In addition, UBI helps to eliminate a moral hazard for rich democracies, namely, their propensity to export social problems to developing countries. One example of this is the heavy subsidies paid to sectors like agriculture as a means of preventing job losses and consequent unemployment (and its political ramifications). Such subsidies price out competing commodities produced elsewhere, perpetuating poverty and stifling development (Oxfam International 2005). UBI would make a tremendous contribution to global development efforts more generally by providing the economic independence on the

basis of which people could exercise their democratic freedoms. Effective political freedoms are a crucial component of any effective development strategy (Sen 1999), and economic independence is a crucial component of political freedom—especially for women, whose emancipation is crucial to any successful development scheme.

Finally, UBI would provide one part of an answer to the objection that supranational democracy is impossible because democracy is based upon affective ties, upon a sense of community, that is manifestly lacking globally. Critics will object that a global extension of BI—or of any version of democracy—ignores or violates the foundations of communal reciprocity on which democracy is based (e.g., Taylor 2003, 2003/4). It is true that democracy requires solidarity, but the tendentious implication of such critiques is that this solidarity must precede democracy’s establishment. In fact, solidarity must be nurtured over time, called forth in part through the design of democratic social institutions emphasizing our common humanity and our common human concerns. One lesson to be learned from interdependence is that when one person suffers subjection, everyone does. Perhaps the greatest advantage of UBI is its clear affirmation that the freedom and equality of each of us is dependent upon freedom and equality for all.

Pateman’s defense of BI underscores her insistence that democracy and subordination are incompatible. My emphasis on global interdependence extends her insights into how social relationships and institutions create subordination, casting her insistence on deep democratization in a new and perhaps (even more) radical and compelling light. I have argued that democracy on Pateman’s terms and on mine *must* be global because the social arrangements that structure and perpetuate subordination today are manifestly global. Democratization thus requires transforming these global arrangements in ways that make emancipation possible for everyone. Universal basic income is a central element in this transformation, for the same reasons Pateman articulates in defending BI within the democratic state: so that everyone can live in equal freedom and dignity.

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