

Topic: Political Philosophy

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1) Introduction

1a) Liberal Equality

In his well known paper of 1991, 'Why Surfers Should Be Fed: The Liberal Case for an Unconditional Basic Income', Philippe Van Parijs describes a time in Hawaii when senator Wadsworth Yee declared that “there must be no parasites in paradise”, referring to people who choose to surf all day rather than take on paid work. Those who choose to surf all day would, under senator Wadsworth Yee's system, have to support themselves and would not be eligible for welfare support from public funds.

It is Van Parijs' contention that this is unfair to “welfare hippies”. Van Parijs believes that a theory truly committed to liberal ideals of equality, of anti-discrimination amongst conceptions of “the good life” (as all political positions should be), would justify an unconditional basic income (UBI):

An unconditional basic income ... is a grant paid to every citizen, irrespective of his or her occupational situation and marital status, and irrespective of his or her work performance or availability for work. It is, in other words, an individual guaranteed minimum income without either a means test or a (willingness to) work condition. (Van Parijs, 1991:102)

The unconditionality of this income sets it aside from most other welfare systems and has led to much controversy surrounding the proposal. Other widely accepted welfare systems are means tested, and this is seen as a necessary condition for ensuring money reaches the genuinely needy. Van Parijs proposes removing this seemingly indispensable condition, and the most common argument against his proposal is that this is contrary to the widely accepted notion of justice that it is unfair for able-bodied people to live off the labour of others. (Jon Elster, 1986: 719)

But Van Parijs wants to argue the opposite: that egalitarian theories lead to a necessity to provide an unconditional income to all; and more importantly, that the contention that this unconditional payment of income would go against justice and fairness is, in itself, discriminatory and unjust.

1b) My aim in this paper

In this paper, I will assess and argue for the introduction of an UBI, laying the basis for this from the perspective of justice and continuing to outline practical, consequentialist arguments to strengthen my case. I address arguments against the proposal both from a moral and a practical perspective, and find that these are all wanting: the moral arguments contradict the argument I make from justice and I find these to be incorrect; and the practical arguments I find to be either inaccurate or wanting because they are superceded by the stronger, unanswerable argument that an UBI is a right as a matter of justice. Motivated by a deep unease at the current state of inequality and the prejudice felt towards low or non-earners, I will draw on my beliefs

about human nature and the lifestyle choices I believe people would make were they given a real choice.

I would like to argue that public institutions, such as the state, ought to be neutral with regards to varying conceptions of the good, and that this means we must accept the right of all not to work if this is in line with their conception of the good. It is my contention that all of the arguments posed against the introduction of an UBI are based upon widely accepted assumptions that we need to reconsider, and that therefore these arguments are flawed.

1c) Motivations

1c) i) A Share of the Earth's Resources

The debate concerning UBI, although largely centered on Van Parijs and often assumed to have originated with him, can be traced back as far as the 1930's, when the Danish artist and philosopher Johannes Hohlenberg (1881-1960) published several essays in defense of an UBI. In an article written in 1934 and entitled 'The Heritage of Society', Hohlenberg, who, Simon Birnbaum and Erik Christensen explain (2007: 1), was heavily influenced by Rudolph Steiner's anthroposophy, discusses the viability of government providing all citizens, irrespective of whether they work, with a basic standard of living. The question of whether this would be viable, he believes can be answered affirmatively. Hohlenberg first explains that due to technological advances, work that used to take many hands is now efficiently carried out by machines, with just one pair of hands to work the machine. Apart from the resulting efficiency and the high levels of production, this also means that there are no longer enough jobs. Further, the production methods used are often not the product of those using them, but are, rather "a heritage that present-day humanity has taken over from an earlier generation, meaning it does not belong to one person but to all..." and this, Hohlenberg believes, means that

it is only natural that all receive their share of its fruits...It is the obligation of the state...to assure that – based on the capacity of production – a certain share of the production is always and at any time assigned as a part of society's heritage, and to make sure that all individuals actually receive their part. (Hohlenberg 1934; English translation in Birnbaum and Christensen 2007: 7).

The essence of this thought can be traced back even further, to 1797 when Thomas Paine published a pamphlet entitled *Agrarian Justice*, in which he wrote about the ownership of the earth:

Civilization...has operated two ways: to make one part of society more affluent, and the other more wretched, than would have been the lot of either in a natural state... it is a position not to be controverted that the earth, in its natural, cultivated state was, and ever would have continued to be, the common property of the human race. In that state every man would have been born to property. He would have been a joint life proprietor with the rest in the property of the soil, and in all its natural productions, vegetable and animal. But the earth in its natural state, as before said, is

capable of supporting but a small number of inhabitants compared with what it is capable of doing in a cultivated state. And as it is impossible to separate the improvement made by cultivation from the earth itself, upon which that improvement is made...but it is nevertheless true, that it is the value of the improvement, only, and not the earth itself, that is individual property. Every proprietor, therefore, of cultivated lands, owes to the community ground-rent...for the land which he holds; and it is from this ground-rent that the fund prod in this plan is to issue... I shall now proceed to the plan I have to propose, which is...To create a national fund, out of which there shall be paid to every person, when arrived at the age of twenty-one years, the sum of fifteen pounds sterling, as a compensation in part, for the loss of his or her natural inheritance, by the introduction of the system of landed property
(Paine, 1797, <http://www.thomaspaine.org/Archives/agjst.html>)

This line of thought is sometimes still followed today and can be seen as influencing the contemporary UBI debate (see e.g. Simon 2000).

Hohlenberg is concerned to dispel the common understanding that unemployment is an evil: “Unemployment results from developments in production methods and cannot be abolished without abolishing such developments.” Rather than an evil, he believes, unemployment is the means to freedom and new possibilities: “We should rather be discussing people’s right to be free from work.” (Hohlenberg 1934: English translation in Birnbaum and Christensen 2007: 7).

8) This is an opinion shared by Van Parijs, who finds that there is a commonly held but mistaken belief today that wants to see all people in work¹:

If the motive in combating unemployment is not some sort of work fetishism- an obsession with keeping everyone busy- but rather a concern to give every person the possibility of taking up gainful employment in which she can find recognition and accomplishment, then the UBI is to be preferred. (Van Parijs: 2000).

Two issues must be separated: how human beings should have their needs satisfied, and how a person should be occupied. Traditionally, the problem of unemployment has been regarded as an occupational problem: how can we get the whole population a job? But the problem lies elsewhere: “If one continues like this, the country will soon be filled up with superfluous roads and bridges that will destroy what is left of the original beauty of the landscape.” (Hohlenberg 1934; English translation in Birnbaum and Christensen 2007: 15)

¹ Right wing British MP Ralph Howell believes a minimum wage should be imposed, it would then be the responsibility of the state to provide work at that wage to anyone who cannot find other work. (Walter 1989: 104)

1c) ii) Dissociation of contribution from distribution

This move away from the belief that all people *should* be working and earning leads to a further departure from a commonly held belief: that there should be a connection between what one does and what one receives. My discussion of an UBI is motivated, among other things, by my belief that our society has generally been shaped and guided by the belief, mistaken, in my opinion, that there is an intrinsic connection between what one contributes and what one receives. The general capitalist idea is that one should be accorded resources depending upon how much one has contributed. This is contrasted with the famous communist slogan, “From each according to his ability, to each according to his need” (Marx 1875/2008: 27). Much of the literature surrounding the UBI debate is shaped by the varying beliefs about the importance of this connection and it is my contention that the lack of investigation into the wide-held belief that there should be a strong connection between what an individual does, and what an individual receives, has led to widely assumed (and mistaken) beliefs about the way we treat others, and that important issues concerning the running of society by the state have thus been overlooked. In assessing the proposal for an UBI, I would like to argue, as Levine (1998) does, for the dissociation of contribution from distribution.

1c) iii) Liberty and Equality

Further, my discussion here is motivated by the importance I attach to the qualities of liberty and equality, which I believe are owed to all people as a matter of justice, but that are often overlooked. I believe in the importance of bringing together these two political ideals that are each inherently good, and, I believe, necessary, but individually insufficient. As Levine explains, until recently the two would appear to many to be totally at odds: “Not long ago, too, hardly anyone would have considered liberal political philosophy a likely basis for egalitarian theory. Indeed, the very idea of a liberal egalitarianism might almost have seemed an oxymoron.” (Levine 1998: 5) I believe that the two ideals can be brought together into a theory of liberal egalitarianism, which draws on the positive features of both equality and liberty.

Liberal egalitarianism is about equality with an open mind concerning conceptions of the good. It is liberal in the sense that it does not rest on any specific conception of the good. It is egalitarian in the liberal sense that it protects equal distribution but without unacceptable interference- it accepts inequality where this is necessary or unavoidable: inequalities that arise purely owing to freely made choices are acceptable, and inequalities that would require a greater evil to eradicate, such as that which would violate the fundamentally deserved liberties of people (self-ownership), are also acceptable.

Liberal egalitarianism does a good job of dissociating contribution from distribution, because it states that all people should be considered as equals, and that they should all have equal provision to lead their lives; yet it respects all conceptions of the good and therefore holds important the right of all to follow their choice of life. Therefore, a liberal egalitarian state can be seen as advocating a more or less equal distribution of goods regardless of what one contributes.

1d) Practicalities

There are two main questions that need to be addressed in any assessment of a political proposal, and these are: 1) is it desirable? 2) Is it feasible? I will attempt to address these questions.

I will also address certain questions that arise when considering the specific proposal for an UBI. For example, would the introduction of an UBI reduce incentives to work, by allowing people the option of a life of leisure? Or would it mean increased working, because the results of gaining a job and failing at it would be less disastrous? Would a human inclination to be active take over, or would laziness prevail?

The arguments for an UBI come in many forms. Some argue that people have a right, as a matter of justice, to an UBI, and these can be seen as philosophical, ethical or moral arguments. Others argue that an UBI is good for society as it tends to produce good consequences, and these are practical or consequentialist arguments. There are also those who find an UBI valuable for both reasons. In the same categories there are arguments against an UBI, some that attack the desirability of an UBI itself (philosophical, ethical or moral arguments), and some that argue against its feasibility (practical).

2) Arguments for a universal basic income

2a) Justice argument

Van Parijs's overriding argument is that a liberal theory of justice justifies "a substantial *unconditional basic income*" (italics in the original) (1991: 102). As this quotation indicates, Van Parijs is working with a libertarian conception of social justice - to be more precise, a "real-libertarian" conception - one that aims to maximise the freedom of people, with priority given to those who are worst off, that is, those who are the least free.

2a)i) Real Freedom

For Van Parijs, the fundamental goal for all social arrangements is "real freedom" rather than simply "freedom", and this distinction is described as being between having the abstract right to choose the lifestyle one likes, and having, also, the economic wherewithal to convert that right into an actuality. This real freedom, Van Parijs believes, is owed to all as a matter of justice.

2a) ii) Anti-discrimination

The right to choose the lifestyle one likes, and to have it respected, is owed to all equally. The choice not to work, is one such lifestyle. Levine, discussing unemployment, asserts that it is widely agreed that involuntary unemployment is an

evil; unemployed individuals lose not only the monetary income associated with employment, but also nonpecuniary benefits. In addition, society loses the productive labour that the unemployed may have been able to expend. This evil, Levine goes on to explain, cannot be addressed without the help of the state, and most people, Levine asserts, would advocate the state intervening to address it. At the same time, however, Levine argues that it would be equally widely considered unacceptable for the state to intervene to prevent *voluntary* unemployment. With reference to those who are wealthy enough not to need to work, who we normally think of as the voluntarily unemployed, this is unproblematic; however, I would like to consider here the often forgotten case of those who choose not to work because they simply prefer a life of leisure. Why should those who, for example, have inherited a fortune, be able to live a life of leisure when most others cannot?

As previously explained, Van Parijs bases his case for an UBI upon the argument that as a matter of justice we must promote the real freedom of all; it is wrong to discriminate between varying conceptions of the good life- the state should remain neutral in this area. There are commonly held beliefs in today's society about what "the good life" consists in, and of what is the best way to lead one's life, and this needs to be addressed: all people should be free to pursue their conception of the good life. This freedom precludes the adoption of a policy that favours the involuntarily unemployed, as such a policy discriminates against those who choose a different life path. Most current welfare systems pay benefits only to the unemployed who can demonstrate that they are either looking for work, or that they would be willing to accept work if they found it, and this, Van Parijs believes, is discriminatory.

According to Levine, there are very few people who would actually choose a life of voluntary unemployment, but this is simply "the limiting case of voluntary underemployment, and there are quite a few people who choose to be less employed than they could otherwise be." The generally accepted answer to the question, "Do the voluntarily idle, like the involuntarily idle, have a right to state support?" (Levine 1998: 14) is 'no'. However, this stance is uninformed by Levine's argument for "fairness to idleness". Levine attempts to show that the state has a duty not only to protect the individual's rights not to work, (to make sure they are not coerced into work) but also a duty to facilitate this right: to make sure they are capable of choosing not to work, and this involves providing material assistance. Levine believes that the popularity of proposals to force the poor into work are mostly fueled by racial and class hostilities, the desire to break down habits of "welfare dependence", and an aim to counter a "culture of poverty". None of these motivations is just, and all are paternalistic, projecting commonly accepted notions of the good life onto others. Levine says that no one should want to conscript the poor into work: this would go against individual autonomy, and everything that our developed, liberal states stand for. Levine believes that even if the commonly held opinion is that able-bodied men and women should contribute to the wealth of the societies they live in, that does not make this right, and nobody should hold that states should force them to do so, because 'individual liberty takes precedence over convictions about how citizens should behave.' (Levine 1998:17) Levine says, "...a right not to work, construed as a liberty only, is relatively unproblematic. The problem arises only when it is proposed that states ought to make abstinence from paid employment materially feasible." (Levine 1998: 18)

Levine's defense of the right not to work as a right that must be upheld by the state is motivated by his belief that *all* conceptions of the good must be respected equally, and he "recalls the classical liberal idea that individuals are free to do whatever is not forbidden by the law" (Levine 1998: 19). He appeals also to the work of John Stuart Mill, according to whom, Levine explains, "individuals' lives and behaviors may be regulated only insofar as they harm others (Mill 1956)" (*ibid*). Voluntary unemployment meets Mill's test, according to Levine:

Idlers do not harm society in general, since even comparatively undeveloped economies are able to reproduce themselves and to expand overall productivity while deploying only a fraction of the labor resources at their disposal. Even if we allow that withdrawing labor inputs constitutes a harm by making others worse off, the harm is negligible; and negligible harms do not justify public intervention. (Levine, pp.19-20)

This raises the question of how we construe harms that are not negligible? And further, harms that are negligible to each person may add up to a harm which is clearly totally unjust. Consider the man who steals a penny from each of the 100,000,000 members of his society. The harm to each is negligible, however, it is clearly not a negligible injustice that this man is now £1m richer than everyone else. Often the gravity of harm does not correlate with the injustice done.

This is an insoluble problem for Levine's stance. However, I do not believe that we need to allow that idlers harm society. It is my contention that idlers are owed, as a matter of justice, what they take from the rest of society. They have a right to the resources they are given under an UBI system, and therefore, although this is, in a sense, taking from the rest of society, since each person has less as a result, it is not, properly speaking harmful, as it is not the right of some people to appropriate all the resources in the first place.

2a) iii) The argument from self respect

Catriona McKinnon is interested in the theory and practice of toleration, equality and distributive justice. In a discussion about the benefits of basic income (McKinnon 2006: 2), she explains that self respect is a fundamental human good: "we think of lives without self respect as hollow and failed..." (McKinnon 2006: 2), and although she admits that money cannot buy one self respect, it does buy access to other goods that cannot be distributed to persons directly, that are necessary for achieving self respect, such as quality work and leisure.

Self respect, then, is owed to all people as a matter of justice, and "...routes to self respect are permanently plural, and public policy ought not to require that we pass judgment on some of these routes as less acceptable than others..." (McKinnon 2006: 3) McKinnon's is an ethical consequentialist argument, for she cites the advantage that an UBI leads to attaining the fundamental human good of self respect, that paths to this goal are plural, and that an UBI promotes equal consideration for all path choices.

There are, however, those who argue against this kind of argument from justice, that it is not discriminatory to favour certain ways of living, as some conceptions of the good are socially beneficial, and others are not, and it is in the interest of all to favour those conceptions that benefit society. And further, there are those who argue that favouring certain conceptions of the good life over others is, whether or not discriminatory, necessary and not an evil, because in some cases certain conceptions of the good life are simply inherently wrong.

Eugene Torisky, for example, asks whether liberal neutrality requires non-discrimination against *all* conceptions of the good life:

...must a liberal society be neutral toward a conception of the good life which encourages or even requires the *imposition* of its values on society, as some fundamentalist religious sects do? And must liberal society be neutral toward conceptions of the good life which encourage or require *harm* to be done to others? (Torisky 1993: 292)

Torisky explains that a liberal society must not only provide for its members the freedom to follow their conception of the good life, it must also protect its members' freedom to act according to their choices: 'Thus unconditional liberal neutrality seems unreasonable, if not self-defeating...' (*ibid*) It is important that the state supports conceptions of the good life, by ensuring that each person is not prevented from following their own conception of the good life, and therefore only non-invasive conceptions of the good life should be supported. And Torisky claims that continually doing nothing, taking from society but not giving back, is invasive on society as a whole and therefore must be prevented.

2b) Scarce resource consumption

On the contrary, Van Parijs points out that our tendency to discriminate against certain life choices in favour of the employed or the involuntarily unemployed, as Torisky has done, is problematic for a further reason: it amounts to awarding a privilege to people with an expensive taste for a scarce resource - jobs are scarce, there are not enough to go around, and therefore those who give up their share of this scarce resource and thereby leave more for others should not be deprived of a fair share of the value of that resource:

...those who take an unfair share of society's resources are not those who opt for such a low-production, low consumption lifestyle. They are people like myself and most of my readers, who, thanks to the attractive job they were given, appropriate a huge employment rent. (Van Parijs 1991: 130)

The opportunities we enjoy are a result of many factors mostly outside of our control, such as our genetic features, the school we went to, or being in the right job interview at the right time. We receive unequal access to endowments which help us get jobs, and this means that one does not 'deserve' all of the salary one is able to earn by virtue of a combination of factors out of one's control. Morally speaking, those people who appropriate what is highly desirable should pay for being so lucky, and those that are not so lucky should be compensated.

However, according to Gijs Donselaar (2009:149-50), this argument gets things the wrong way round:

If some people have a taste for employment that I am not interested in so that I do not have to forgo anything if they get it all, then this employment is not scarce between us and their taste for it cannot be called expensive.

The choice of the voluntarily unemployed to be unemployed does not benefit others; rather it is their way of not harming others: if they were to try to have a stake in that in which they were not interested, then that would be purely so that they could benefit at the cost of others, and that would be parasitic. Donselaar (2009:154) says that it is exploitative for the voluntarily unemployed to take employment rents “because he acquires the fruit of the labor of someone else, and the benefit of another’s pains, without giving up anything he wants to have for himself...”. However, Donselaar’s argument here is based on his belief that people do not have an unconditional right to a share of employment, but that that right is conditional on willingness to work, and this, I believe, is mistaken. All people, I believe, along with Van Parijs, are entitled to either a share of employment, or if that is not how they wish to spend their time, should be entitled to a share of the profits that others make using natural resources (which are commonly owned), which others have a larger share of due to the disinterest of the voluntarily unemployed: others benefit from certain people not wanting to take up a portion of the employment (or the land with which to make money), of which there is not enough to go around. This seems to me to be evidently a case of mutual benefit: those who want to work and earn money are enabled to do so precisely by others preferring a life of leisure, therefore it is fair if the workers donate some of their earnings to facilitate the lifestyle of others which in turn facilitates their position of employment. No person, I believe, ‘deserves’ all of their high salary purely because of their willingness to work.

2c) Free riders – A moral objection

Donselaar’s argument is a moral, or ethical one, based upon his belief that for one to stake a claim in the fruits of others’ labour without contributing is unjust. This is known as the reciprocity or ‘free riders’ argument. This is the first of the main arguments against an UBI that I will discuss.

Rawls (1999: 96), among others, also believed that membership in society involves reciprocity:

...when a number of persons engage in a just, mutually advantageous, cooperative venture according to rules and thus restrain their liberty in ways necessary to yield advantages for all, those who have submitted to these restrictions have a right to similar acquiescence on the part of those who have benefited from their submission.

However, the argument for reciprocity driven by this notion is often based upon the idea that one acquires the right to coerce someone by bestowing some benefit on them and then demanding reciprocal payment, and this, as Nozick (1974: 95) explains, is

false:

You may not decide to give me something, for example a book, and then grab money from me to pay for it ... You have, if anything, even less reason to demand payment if your activity that gives me the book also benefits you: suppose that your best way of getting exercise is by throwing books into people's houses, or that some other activity of yours thrusts books into people's houses as an unavoidable side effect ... One cannot, whatever one's purposes, just act so as to give people benefits and then demand (or seize) payment. Nor can a group of persons do this.

In an article entitled 'The Principle of Fairness and Free-Rider Problems', Richard Arneson describes cases in which people refuse to cooperate in socially beneficial situations, but which do not involve free riding. For example, he talks about the "nervous cooperator", and the "reluctant cooperator" who both desire to contribute, but both fail to do so, in one case because of the worry that not enough others will do so to make the scheme viable, and in the other, due to a reluctance to be free ridden upon by the idle, or assist them to exploit. (Arneson 1982: 622)

These two types of "cooperators" are not free riders, because, Arneson explains, they do not have the intention of getting "something for nothing"; they do not desire to benefit from the cooperative behaviour of others without contributing their fair share of cooperation. According to Arneson, this desire is what drives a free rider.

However, Nozick and Arneson's arguments have force only against cases of *supposed* free riding: those in which a person does not knowingly and intentionally take a benefit from another. My concern is to argue that even cases of conscious free riding, in which a person does knowingly and intentionally take a benefit from another, are justifiable. In this vein, Catriona McKinnon argues that much depends on how 'contribution' is defined:

The liberal egalitarian version of the criticism operates with a narrow conception of contribution as constituted by paying taxes. Nuancing this conception brings it closer to the Marxist version: if what matters is contribution understood as participation in the shared life of society that is in some way productive, and if it is accepted that persons' productivity can take very different forms... then tax paying is reduced to a sufficient but not necessary condition for contribution. (McKinnon 2006:3)

Elizabeth Anderson similarly claims that a just society would recognize many more activities than simply paid labour as 'contributing' to society (Anderson 2004: 251) The argument that it is unfair for able bodied people to live off others can be construed as consistent with Van Parijs' thought, as the Malibu surfers are not living off others, but are only using their share of the rents that would otherwise be monopolized by those who hold a rich society's productive jobs. However, it is, in fact, Van Parijs' contention that even those who wish to do nothing and to live off others should not be subject to reproach. Van Parijs and Van der Veen write that if everybody is given the choice, some will choose to do little, while others will choose

to work, because they want more money, or are bored doing nothing. If those who choose to work envy the leisure of those who choose not to, they can follow suit, and if they do, they will no longer envy the idlers. Everyone must be given the real freedom not to work, even if everybody does not choose to take it; the real freedom of the least free is to be the focus, and resources are the route to increasing this freedom (Van der Veen and Van Parijs 1986b: 726). Although, according to Brian Barry (2000), the wish to live at others' expense is an antisocial trait, and therefore there is no reason for making special efforts to indulge it, Van Parijs points out that it is unfair if those who are congenitally lazy have a smaller chance of getting what they want than those who are inclined to work.

Further, to the free rider objection, Van der Veen and Van Parijs argue that even if we accept that the UBI is undeserved, we do not have to give in to the free rider objection, as the undeservedness of the income is acceptable, because it is ethically indistinguishable from the undeserved luck that massively affects the present distribution of wealth, income, and leisure, such as our race, education, how gifted academically, how attractive and ambitious we are. A minimum condition of fair distribution is that everyone should be guaranteed a small share of these undeserved gifts. Nothing achieves this more securely than an UBI. We have a system that rewards people without regard for how much they contribute:

Formal fairness is at least as well respected when everyone enjoys the freedom not to work as when no one does, as would be the case in a socialist society strictly ruled by the principle "To each according to his labour." And it is definitely better respected when everyone is granted that freedom than when the latter is the privilege of a small minority, as it is in all existing capitalist societies, whether with or without a substantial welfare state. (Van der Veen and Van Parijs 1986b: 726)

Levine discusses whether the issue of free-riding is objectionable. He says "I will not challenge the idea that voluntary idlers are free riders, nor the contention that, as such, they take advantage of others; nor will I deny that, in doing so, they offend against fairness." (Levine 1998: 29) Levine wants to show that this advantage taking, or free riding, is not, as is commonly assumed, objectionable and unjust. In his view, the principle upon which the free rider objection rests could serve to attack nearly all social interactions. There are benefits and rewards involved in all social interactions, and it is almost impossible, generally, to ensure that each person benefits exactly according to his contribution:

...there are few, if any, public goods whose benefits do not affect individuals differentially- in ways that fail to correspond proportionally to individuals' contributions toward the production of these goods. Almost without exception, therefore, whenever a public good is supplied, some individuals are in varying degrees free riding on the contributions of others...each of us always free rides, as it were, on the culture, knowledge, and techniques that are every living human being's inheritance from preceding generations. (Levine 1998: 30)

The free rider objection is, I believe, most forcibly attacked by the arguments for an

UBI as a matter of justice. I believe the right of all to real freedom and self-respect entails both that one is not free riding if one chooses to not work, and that even if one is free riding, this is acceptable because of one's rights to lead their life according to their own desires.

2d) Practical Arguments

2d) i) Benefits for society

Aside from the philosophical arguments for an UBI which draw on the inherent, deontological qualities or justice of such a scheme, there are many practical arguments for an UBI, including the innumerable benefits for society.

Levine (1998: 20-24) identifies one such consequentialist benefit of an UBI, namely that it would allow people to carry out unpaid but socially useful work. He thinks that if it were not for many people being effectively coerced into paid employment because of a lack of other viable options, they would have chosen to pursue a conception of the good which may include charity work, which the markets fail to reward or see as worthy of reward. Similarly, according to Van der Veen and Van Parijs (1986b: 727), we should not accept that paid work alone entitles one to any part of the social product. For example, women should not be paid for bearing and rearing children, yet those who do it should not have to be dependants, so there is no way, they believe, that one can stick to the principle that only those who perform (paid) work – or have done so or give evidence that they would gladly do so - are entitled to an income of their own. Allowing everyone an UBI would facilitate the increased take-up of socially valuable, but non-paid, voluntary work, such as looking after elderly relatives, which reduces the strain on care homes and hospitals, and also makes society more “community based”.

Levine, as well as Van Parijs and Van der Veen, believes it is important that all activities one may choose to pursue, whether this be looking after an elderly relative or young children, writing poetry or surfing, be equally respected. For all people who are motivated by their conception of the good life, leisure is not an expensive taste, but a “core constituent of a plan of life, a fundamental value. In a word, it is special.” (Levine 1998: 22)

Andre Gorz, however, has argued that while some welfare institutions create a feeling of common interest, community and solidarity, an UBI does not imply any communicative bond or voluntary cooperation. The feeling of participation that it is often claimed would be attributed to the introduction of an UBI, does not, Gorz explains, mean people care for each other, it simply means that they are being taken care of better by the state. In a complex, modern society, income and membership in a community are not enough to make you feel that you are a citizen, or others' equal; to feel equal, you need to feel that you are *useful* to society as a whole. For example, a person may feel useful for taking care of their elderly mother, but not feel useful to society as a whole. Even if they do feel useful to society as a whole, voluntary actions do not confer on one the legal, economic or civil rights that performing a job do (Gorz 1992: 180).

However, I believe that the reason this feels like a just criticism is that we live in a tradition where certain types of work are rewarded, while others are overlooked. The introduction of an UBI would lead to useful but unpaid jobs to be highly valued. Gorz's argument that people would not care for each other just because of the feeling of participation is overly pessimistic. I believe that there would, in fact, be far more voluntary charitable work were people able to afford to participate in it. It is my contention that it is the desire of many people currently to do more caring work, but most people cannot afford to do so. I believe that Gorz's argument that even if one feels useful caring for an elderly relative, one does not feel useful to society as a whole, is mistaken. It would be extremely beneficial to society if more people looked after their relatives rather than sending them into state funded care. With an UBI, every person would be given an equal starting platform of legal, economic and civil rights, upon which to choose how to live their life.

According to Van der Veen, the fact that an UBI would, as I have just argued, "enable citizens to take part in a dense network of diverse and socially beneficial human activities, which together make up the quality of a good society" cannot be used to defend an UBI, because this response is 'vulnerable to the reply that social rights of citizenship, when one sincerely accepts the participatory nature of the democratic community, seem to require correlative obligations. These obligations would enjoin one to take part actively in performing ...tax-contributing paid labour, caring work, or communal service...' (Van der Veen, 1998: 144-5). However, the right to basic income lies fully outside the ambit of reciprocity norms. As Van Parijs (1997: 329) says, reciprocity becomes important in the normative organization of our society only "in the regulation of access to anything over and above universal basic endowments." So reciprocity and contributing to society have nothing to do with basic income. Basic income should simply be a given, an unconditional right, and only anything over and above it, necessary for the smooth running of society and also for practical reasons, should require contribution.

Charles Murray (2008:11) claims current welfare systems have served to make life as easy and decision free as possible, because power and control lies with the state:

The welfare system drains too much of the life from life. Specifically it does so by stripping the institutions of family and community of many of their functions and responsibilities. The GI² returns those functions and responsibilities to family and community.

With responsibility and control back with the people, families and communities, Murray believes people would pull together, which would be enormously beneficial for society. Murray also argues that an UBI system that starts making payments at 21 years of age, will mean fewer births to single women under the age of 21, as those women know they will not yet receive their basic income. Furthermore an UBI would deter young women with little money from having children they cannot afford to look after, as they would know that they would have to look after those children from their

² *GI = Guaranteed income, or UBI*

existing guaranteed basic income, rather than receiving, as they do under current schemes, more money for each child they have. Finally (Murray 2008:8)

The GI radically increases the economic penalties for fathers who are unemployed or working off the books. Under the GI, every man aged 21 or over has a known income stream deposited to a known bank account every month that can be tapped by a court order.

2d) ii) No stigma involved

Many of the most persuasive arguments in favour of an UBI draw on the benefits it entails for workers, particularly low-income workers, and the most needy members of society. In our society there is a real stigma about being poor, which means that people who need help are often too embarrassed to seek it. Barry explains that “means tested benefits [are]...demoralizing, demeaning, and expensive to administer” (Barry 2000). UBI, as an income paid to all, would remove this stigma. Opposed to this argument is the claim that involved in feelings of a lack of self worth and embarrassment is much more than just money; we need more than money in order to feel worthy, successful and content. However true this may be, I believe that the introduction of a basic income is a step in the right direction. The argument that we need more than just money to feel self-worth may be true, but this may involve further interference in individuals’ lives, and this needs to be kept to a minimum, otherwise we are in danger of being overly paternalistic. UBI can help people gain self respect without unacceptable interference.

2d) iii) Job flexibility, power and fairness for the employees

Asked what he thinks would be the effects of an UBI on the market, in an interview with Christopher Bertram, Van Parijs explains that he believes that it would be beneficial for the market, as well as for workers, as it would enable people to be offered and to accept jobs, including part time jobs, that currently pay less than the benefit system provides, and which can currently not be easily filled. Van Parijs, as a proponent of liberty and real freedom for all, believes in the inherent worth of maximum choice, flexibility and fairness for employees, and therefore also sees a further consequential quality of UBI to be that it would give those who usually earn a very low salary, doing an undesirable, yet important job, the chance to refuse this work, until the wages increase. Employers will need to make certain jobs more attractive if they are to find willing workers. This would help to reform the wages system such that work would be paid according to how strenuous or stressful it is, rather than according to values such as status. This would mean that one could choose to work in an unpleasant job but earn well, or choose a more enjoyable job, but earn less; this is fair and it is the opposite of the current system:

...workers’ unconditional entitlement to a substantial universal grant will simultaneously push up the wage rate for unattractive, unrewarding work (which no one is now forced to accept in order to survive) and bring down the average wage rate for attractive, intrinsically rewarding work (because fundamental needs are covered anyway, people can now accept a high-

quality job paid far below the guaranteed income level). (Van der Veen and Van Parijs 1986a: 645-6)

In summary, an UBI would put people in a better position to pursue their aspirations, refuse grueling work, and exit from abusive employment relationships. Van Parijs is not alone in this belief. Yannick Vanderborght also argues that an UBI would provide workers with a true, reliable and unconditional “exit option”, which in turn gives them bargaining power. However, Vanderborght also argues that “one should not too quickly conclude that a general increase in salaries is necessarily to be expected in the aftermath of such a scheme.” Rather, Vanderborght claims, the introduction of an UBI could actually bring wages down: “employers could start lowering all wages, considering that an UBI is providing the complement needed to reach the level of legal minimum wages.” (Vanderborght 2006:6) This, however, could be prevented with minimum wage restrictions: the minimum wage would be stipulated to be the wage the employer must pay, regardless of any other income received.

Arguing against the supposed benefit of an UBI, that it would empower employees and thereby increase wages, Rathke (2000) claims that the employment system includes so many jobs that are really unappealing that it is very unlikely that these would ever be filled if people could get paid even without working. However, if a job exists, then presumably that job needs to be done somehow, and therefore, if people have the freedom to turn down this kind of work, which is commonly very low paid, then the employers will be forced to increase wages for this work, meaning that it will become gradually more and more appealing. The funds for increasing pay for unappealing work could be found by reducing the pay of very appealing work, or by reducing the earnings of very wealthy employers. I find Rathke’s argument weak, because I believe there are very few people who would actually choose a life of leisure, a thought that has been well expressed by Hohlenberg (1934; English translation in Birnbaum and Christensen 2007: 15).

It is therefore a completely unfounded worry that, provided that such a possibility for freedom were given, there would not be enough people to do the material work that would still be necessary. The majority would not be able to cope with this freedom and would suffer a mental breakdown because of it. There will always be more than enough people willing to go back to the treadmill because, not being able to maintain their personality in the empty space of freedom, they need a fixed and authorised framework for their lives. But those capable of it should have a chance.

Edmund Phelps (2000) writes that pay rates available to low-wage workers are so low that the introduction of an UBI may seem very towering, and also further depreciate his earning power, which is bad for morale. This, however, is refuted by the argument that an UBI would lead to gains in employees’ power, and wages increasing for low paid work. Further, Phelps’ argument that low earners would be overwhelmed by the improvement in their situation is no reason not to help people, and it is also paternalistic. Phelps believes that what matters to people is not just their total income; an UBI cannot substitute for the satisfaction of having earned one’s way without help from parents, friends or the state. He believes that low-wage employment subsidies instead of an UBI would be more effective in fulfilling people’s sense of purpose, but

this is overly paternalistic: it is not up to the state to prevent people from receiving help because the state believes it is good for them to work.

2d) iv) Work flexibility good for society and the environment

A further benefit for society, and for the environment as well, is that UBI tackles unemployment without relying on fast growth. In ‘A Basic Income for All’ Van Parijs admits that unemployment is an issue, and explains that although often it is thought that the way to deal with this is to focus on productivism - the obsessive pursuit of economic growth - technological growth turns out to eliminate jobs, and is very damaging for the environment. With an UBI environmentalist issues can be tackled at the same time as unemployment and other social issues.

Another option for combating the problem of scarce jobs is to reduce worker’s earnings. This would reduce the cost of labour, so machines could be used less. From a utilitarian perspective, this can be seen as very appealing: currently we have a situation of many people working too much, and many people not working enough, so if we balance this out, we could increase the happiness of all, by having a situation of *more* people earning *less*, or working fewer hours each week.

A further, similar argument for the benefits of work flexibility for employees is that if we give people of all classes the opportunity to reduce their working time or even take a complete break from work in order to look after their children or elderly relatives, society will save on prisons and hospitals, which will also improve the human capital of the next generation. This is because people will generally be less desperate and stretched financially, so will resort to crime less, and people will generally be less overworked, which creates ill health, so will need medical treatment less. An UBI is a simple and effective instrument in the service of keeping a socially and economically sound balance between the supply of paid labor and the rest of our lives. If we were to implement it, we could do away with many other existing benefits, meaning that depending on the level of the current welfare systems in place, the UBI system may not, financially, be that different from our current situation.

2e) Why an UBI is better than its usual competitors

2e) i) Way out of the poverty trap

In a book aptly entitled *Basic Income- Freedom from Poverty, Freedom to Work*, Tony Walter discusses what would be the outcome if an UBI scheme were introduced. Walter has the issue the right way round, I believe, when he uses the expression ‘freedom to work’. Walter explains that it is commonly overlooked that many people on benefits do not want to be unemployed, but often the employment they could find would be very poorly paid, yet they would lose their benefits, and therefore it is not worth them taking the job. If welfare is offered only to those in need, it encourages them to stay in need, and others to get into a similar situation. So, benefits should be paid independently of someone’s employment status: “If everyone receives a basic income, then no-one will choose to be idle in order to qualify for benefits, and all may earn without fear of losing benefits.” (Walter 1989:13) This

‘way out of the poverty trap’ is one of the advantages Van Parijs also cites in favour of an UBI:

UBI can be expected to deal far better than an NIT³ with an important aspect of the "unemployment trap". Whether it makes any sense for an unemployed person to look for or accept a job does not only depend on the difference between income at work and out of work. What deters people from getting out to work is often the reasonable fear of uncertainty. While they try a new job, or just after they lose one, the regular flow of benefits is often interrupted. The risk of administrative time lags – especially among people who may have a limited knowledge of their entitlements and the fear of going into debt, or for people who are likely to have no savings to fall back on – may make sticking to benefits the wisest option. Unlike a NIT, an UBI provides a firm basis of income that keeps flowing whether one is in or out of work. And it is therefore far better suited to handle this aspect of the poverty trap. (Van Parijs 2000).

Income from the state would not replace hard work and enterprise, but would lay the basis for it.

2e) ii) Certain to benefit all that need benefit

Goodin (1992: 2007) accepts that there are costs and disadvantages to such an indiscriminate policy, but claims that the advantages outweigh the costs. Even if an UBI is more expensive than current welfare systems, this does not detract from the highly important benefits. With an UBI, we do not have to worry about means testing people, a system that is prone to sociological errors and problems because of inevitable social change. Goodin argues that if we could get benefits to the deserving and only the deserving, that would be perfect, but this is not possible and therefore it is better to ensure all the deserving receive benefits even if this means the undeserving also receiving benefits, than to rule out any undeserving recipients by also ruling out the needy.⁴

2e) iii) Fair distribution within the household and high take up rate

A further benefit the UBI has over its usual competitor, is that it allows fair distribution within the household:

although an NIT could in principle be individualized, it operates most naturally and is usually proposed at the household level. As a result, even if the inter-household distribution of income were exactly the same under an NIT and the corresponding UBI, the intra-household distribution will be far less unequal under the UBI. In particular, under current

³ Negative Income Tax: a system whereby people earning a certain income pay no taxes, people earning above that level pay a proportion of their income in taxes, and those earning under that level receive a payment of a proportion of the amount their income falls under that level.

⁴ See also Van der Veen (1998: 144).

circumstances, the income that directly accrues to women will be considerably higher under the UBI than the NIT, since the latter tends to ascribe to the household's higher earner at least part of the tax credit of the low- or non-earning partner. (Van Parijs (2000).

Tony Walter explains that basic income is neutral between men and women, and this is invaluable as a first step towards liberating and empowering women who have long been dependent on their earning husbands, who often do not pay them a sufficient allowance. It is a commonly overlooked fact that within fairly affluent households, it is possible for women and children to live in relative poverty. There have been attempts by recent western governments to help families that are earning but still struggling, but, Walter explains, these are ineffective, or insufficient. One such method has been to provide tax credits on earnings, or to allow those who have dependent spouses or offspring at home to have a tax exemption, but "There is no guarantee that the value of the exemption will be passed on to the person in the household who has to pay the bills, often the wife." (Walter 1989:63) But "Basic income would ...transform the dependent wife into a woman of independent means, with the possibility of thinking and acting on her own, just as her husband can" (Walter 1989:117). Walter also describes how many women who would like to go out to work are unable to because of child care duties, and many women who would rather stay at home with their children are forced to go out and earn in order to make ends meet. Basic income would help these women have choice.

A further benefit of an UBI is that it is simple so allows a higher take up rate, whereas we know that in the case of social welfare programs, ignorance or confusion prevents some people from getting access to payments.

2e) iv) Basic income less expensive than means testing

If we accept that an UBI would provide a way out of the poverty trap, we must test its economic viability, and this has been widely explored. It is sometimes argued that by removing means testing, basic income would be administratively less expensive than conditional systems. However, some claim that negative income taxes commonly associated with means tested systems are actually cheaper than an UBI would be, because they avoid all the to-and-fro that results from paying a basic income and then taxing it back from those with high incomes (Van Parijs 2000). Further, it is often argued that as basic income is paid to everybody, as opposed to previous systems whereby only some were receiving benefits, the state will need to find more money, so regardless of whether UBI is administratively less expensive, it will be more expensive overall. David Purdy's answer is that any advanced capitalist country can afford a basic income, but the question is what tax-transfer regime would be required, and how the performance of the economy would be affected by such a change in regime. Purdy says the current welfare system is failing:

Designed for a world of low unemployment, relative job security, stable marriages, traditional gender roles and two-parent, one-earner families, the system has struggled to cope with higher rates of unemployment, flexible labour markets, rising divorce rates, partial gender convergence and the growing diversity of family and household forms. (Purdy 2007:6)

In discussing the logistics of funding an UBI, three categories of people can be identified:

- 1) those who currently claim benefit; this group would receive more or less the same amount.
- 2) people who currently work; this group would generally have most of what they get in the form of UBI taken away in taxes from what they earn, so again there would be little change overall.
- 3) those who do not presently have any income from benefits or earnings, mostly housewives; many tax systems currently have an arrangement whereby the working partners of non-workers receive an increased tax allowance for that non-working partner, but with an UBI paid directly to each partner, the working partner would be paying more in taxes.

Households who would lose a little would be those who could afford to; households who gain a little would be those that need it, but over all the cost of funding would be small. The UBI, even if at a low level, would serve to better the situation of the least advantaged, even if only marginally, with those people then able to gradually further improve their own situation.

3) Criticisms

As well as the criticisms of an UBI that have surfaced throughout this discussion, plus the free riders objection, there are several practical objections that ought to be assessed.

3a) Contributing as part of being a member of society

I argued previously that one of the benefits of an UBI is that it would facilitate a society with a "community spirit", where all people feel that they are members of the social group, with equal worth to all others. This claim is not without its critics. Torisky, for example, claims that contributing to society is what confers membership on a person, and although wealthy states should, of course, help the badly off, it is to deprive them of membership to not require that they personally contribute:

...a truly unconditional basic income such as that recommended by Van Parijs goes too far, by exempting its recipients from the minimal cost of membership in society and thereby depriving them of the dignity and status of a member (Torisky 1993:296)

Van Parijs, Torisky claims, undervalues a shared consensus on political values. However, this argument is unacceptably paternalistic. The state should not be involved in dictating how one should live in order to feel like a true member of the community. It is no argument against a proposal that it exempts its recipients from the minimal cost of membership in society, thereby depriving them of the dignity and status of a member, as this, in itself, is projecting one's conception of the good onto others. It is, as Van Parijs would argue, to discriminate against certain conceptions of the good, and

to favour one particular conception. Any argument that draws on an UBI leading to life paths that are not in accordance with one person's, or even the overriding majority or people's conception of the good, is, I believe, fatally flawed because this is to do exactly what the proposal is designed to show is unacceptable: to project one's conception of the good onto others, when all conceptions of the good should be equally well respected. Similarly, Hohlenberg argues that technology has relieved humans from "hundreds of years of slavery", and that

It can't be the task of either the state or of the productive life to provide people with an occupation. To be active must be up to the will of the individual. What one wants to occupy oneself with and choose as one's life's engagement, and thereafter use time and energy on, must be one's own decision. (Hohlenberg 1934; English translation in Birnbaum and Christensen 2007: 8-9).

3b) UBI insufficient to be a solo system

Elizabeth Anderson has argued that if an UBI were to be secured only at a low level, which it would surely need to be to ensure that there remains an incentive to work, then this level would not be sufficient to support those who really need it. It may allow able bodied lazy people to have a comfortable existence, but it does not account for the fact that different people are differently naturally endowed to convert income into freedoms; for example, disabled people or those looking after dependents need more resources to achieve the same level of freedom as able-bodied persons.

Further, many of the arguments Van Parijs put forward in defense of an UBI as superior to a NIT rely on the UBI being the sole benefit system, i.e. the advantage of UBI being administratively cheaper to apply than NIT, or the lack of stigma involved. And if, as Van Parijs himself has admitted is the case, an UBI would only be viable at a very low rate (at least at first), then we would need to supplement it with further, means tested benefits, for the particularly needy for whom the UBI is not sufficient. This makes redundant several of the arguments in favour of an UBI.

A related criticism of the proposal is found in William G. Galston's article entitled 'What about reciprocity?' which is a response to Van Parijs' 'A Basic Income for All'. Here Galston argues that an UBI would be unaffordable at any substantial level, and that if implemented in some places but not others, it would cause chaos - people would all try to leave for the place with the UBI, and we could not defend this kind of immigration in virtue of the contribution the immigrants would make to the country, as there would be none. The first part of this criticism and Anderson's criticism are related because they both draw on the fact that an UBI could only feasibly be implemented now at a very low level, and that this, therefore, would detract from the advantages that have been argued for an UBI.

Firstly, in response to Galston's argument about migration, I believe that the kind of migration laws we currently have would be equally useful in preventing an

unacceptable influx of migrants. Laws would restrict the numbers of people entering the country, and those who were able to enter would be subject to the same incentives as all citizens, meaning that in time they would become involved in and boost the economy. Further, I believe that the proposal for an UBI requires vision, the system would not be instantly achievable and therefore we need to look at the long term effects. In time, I believe, this is a system that would grow in popularity and therefore we would eventually find it in all states, rendering the immigration problem redundant.

In response to the remaining criticism, that an UBI would only be possible at a very low level, I would also like to appeal to this longer term vision. I agree, to a certain extent, that an UBI needs to be at a substantially higher rate, in the long term, than that at which it could feasibly be implemented now, in order for it to gain support in relation to many of the advantages I have detailed in its favour. However, I believe that implementing an UBI at a lower level in the short term is what is necessary in order to ever achieve it at the ideal level - the highest level possible. If an UBI were to be implemented at a low level, this would still serve to help those at the lower end of the spectrum, and it would lead to a more efficient community of people, with earnings more fairly distributed amongst people. There would be less work that the state had to fund, as more of this would be being voluntarily carried out by members of the society who could now afford to do so. Further, the stigma argument would still have strength as an UBI at a low level would still be supplemented with an NHS, for example, which would serve to assist the disabled, for whom a low UBI would be insufficient to cover basic needs. This level of further, means tested benefit is generally not surrounded by the kind of stigma that surrounds welfare benefits that the UBI system claimed, in its favour, to bypass.

4) Concluding remarks

I have been motivated by the unequal distribution of wealth in our society. This led me to assess the right of all to freedom and equality, which, in turn, led me to a liberal egalitarian stance. I believe that it is the right of all people to be supported by the state, and that this involves an amount of redistribution of wealth. In this programme, there must be total neutrality concerning what an individual decides to do with his/her share of the wealth of the state, excluding action that harms others. This belief is backed by my strong contention that there is much misguided thought about equality. If one is to accept the argument from justice, that each person has a right to have their life choice respected and facilitated and to have a share of the basic resources of our earth, then the arguments of Anderson and Galston become redundant as they are simply beside the point- like Van Parijs, I believe in the right of all to an UBI, as a matter of justice, and the practical arguments put forward merely strengthen this case. Anderson and Galston's arguments simply highlight imperfections: areas where improvement is needed in the proposal.

I do not believe that there are, in reality, many people who would actually choose a life of subsistence supported by an UBI. If we accept an UBI because we accept the inalienable right not to work, or, as Levine puts it, 'fairness to idleness', then UBI will facilitate a society not full of 'free-riders', but a more equal society, involving employment flexibility, shorter working hours, the elderly being looked after by their

families, offspring looked after by their parents, charitable work more readily embarked on, and generally more fulfilled, integrated members of society.

I believe I have successfully addressed all the philosophical and practical arguments for and against an UBI. To conclude I would like to refer to a practical example which supports my case. The arguments against the introduction of an UBI based on the negative affects this would have on society are clearly speculative, and speculation in reply is all I can offer in the absence of an actual long term trial. But I believe that my rather more optimistic outlook on what will be the consequences for society finds support, albeit not conclusive proof, from statistics reported by Elizabeth Anderson. Arguments against the UBI generally involve the belief that welfare recipients are people who reject the work ethic, enjoy a life of idleness, and lack a sense of responsibility and motivation to work. Now, while I stand by my contention that these are not ways of being that can be condemned, as all lifestyles must be equally respected; from a practical point of view, I understand that an UBI would only be viable if these people were in a small minority, with the majority rejecting this lifestyle. I therefore find Anderson's statistics very interesting: Anderson argues that if the claims I outlined above about what welfare recipients are like were true, then

few recipients would have significant prior work experience before going on welfare, or mix welfare with work, because they despise low-wage jobs. Most would be on welfare continuously for a long time, because they prefer free-riding to self-sufficiency. Few would exit welfare by getting a low-paying, menial job (Anderson 2004: 249).

But, in fact, Anderson goes on, the evidence contradicts all of these assumptions (numbers in square brackets refer to Anderson's footnotes):

More than four-fifths of AFDC⁵ recipients had prior work experience, on average more than five years [21]. From 36–60% of recipients worked to supplement their welfare payments, usually at low-paying informal sector jobs [22]. Median lifetime AFDC use was only about three years. Less than a quarter of recipients received welfare for a decade or more. The vast majority of long-term users did not use it continuously, but left it frequently, only to return [23]. Most exits from welfare were due to recipients' finding work [24].⁷ (Anderson, 2004:249)

This serves, I believe, as evidence against the prejudiced beliefs about the nature of people who receive benefits, and therefore goes to show that an UBI would, in fact, help those in the worst situation, not by allowing them to free ride on the contribution of others, but by allowing them to help themselves out of the poverty trap by finding at least part time work, or allowing them to seek further education or training in an attempt to increase their employability, or allowing them to stay at home and look after their dependents without struggling, as those who are better off can already

⁵ AFDC ('Aid to Families with Dependent Children') is a USA system whereby families are assisted where they need assistance, but there is no requirement to work. This was replaced by a system called Temporary Assistance to Needy Families, a form of assistance to poor parents conditional on their working for a wage.

afford to do.

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