

WHY PHILOSOPHERS SHOULD BE FED:
THE QUESTION OF A UNIVERSAL BASIC INCOME

By

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Abstract:

The aim of this thesis is to give a critical examination to a philosophical argument in favor of a Universal Basic Income. I will argue that (i) the current state of resource distribution is unjust, according to principles espoused by Robert Nozick, and (ii) that Karl Widerquist's conception of ECSO Freedom is a cogent conception of freedom that gives moral grounding to a Universal Basic Income. Then I analyze arguments against a Universal Basic Income by considering if different systems of resource distribution would more effectively adhere to ECSO Freedom. In the end, I conclude that (iii) transfers should be paid unconditionally and (iv) that transfers should be "basic".

Why Philosophers Should Be Fed: The Question of a Universal Basic Income

Excerpt from Agrarian Justice:

“Cultivation is at least one of the greatest natural improvements ever made by human invention. It has given to created earth a tenfold value. But the landed monopoly that began with it has produced the greatest evil. It has dispossessed more than half the inhabitants of every nation of their natural inheritance, without providing for them, as ought to have been done, an indemnification for that loss, and has thereby created a species of poverty and wretchedness that did not exist before. In advocating the case of the persons thus dispossessed, it is a right, and not a charity, that I am pleading for. But it is that kind of right which, being neglected at first, could not be brought forward afterwards till heaven had opened the way by a revolution in the system of government. Let us then do honour to revolutions by justice, and give currency to their principles by blessings. Having thus in a few words, opened the merits of the case, 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 twentyone 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.”¹

- Thomas Paine, Revolutionary, Founding Father

¹ Paine, Thomas. *Agrarian Justice*. 1797. 9-10

I. What is an Unconditional Basic Income?

Years before it's time, Thomas Paine argued for the idea that every person ought to be given a sum of money in recognition of their claim to a part of the common land. Although he spoke of payments of sterling pounds over 200 years ago, this is an idea that has gathered steam in recent decades. In the modern era, the compensation Thomas Paine envisioned has led to the idea of a Universal Basic Income (UBI). The UBI starts from a very intuitive idea: in order to get rid of poverty, it is necessary to give people money. The UBI program would give every adult in the United States a lump-sum of unconditionally guaranteed money, distributed monthly, regardless of occupation, income level, or circumstances. Needless to say, this program would be incredibly expensive. The funding for it would come from the elimination of food stamps, oil and energy subsidies, housing subsidies, and any other of the 79 programs which might fit under the category "needs-based assistance".² These cuts add up to approximately one trillion dollars that are currently spent on needs-based assistance welfare.³ The practical aim of the UBI is to provide everyone access to the essential goods such as healthcare, education, and food, which are essential in a modern state as compensation for the use by others of the common land.

There are many practical goods that a UBI would provide to a society. It would give people the chance to go back to school and achieve career aspirations that they couldn't have achieved while forced to work at a dead-end job. It would allow single parents to stay at home to nurture their growing children while still providing life's essentials. It would enable hundreds of

² Robert Rector, *Examining the Means-tested Welfare State: 79 Programs and \$927 Billion in Annual Spending*, (The Heritage Foundation, 2012)
<http://budget.house.gov/uploadedfiles/rectortestimony04172012.pdf>

³ THE BUDGET AND ECONOMIC OUTLOOK: 2016 TO 2026. Congressional Budget Office.
https://www.cbo.gov/sites/default/files/114th-congress-2015-2016/reports/51129-2016Outlook_OneCol-2.pdf#page=182 . 182

thousands of homeless people in the US to afford housing. Without the fear of a hungry family, it would empower unions and workers to strike for higher wages until they could secure equitable terms. By unconditionally securing access to these goods for all, the UBI would empower people to look past mere survival and to thrive. Beyond this list of benefits, there is reason to think that a UBI could answer a multitude of societal problems.⁴

In addition, a UBI would greatly increase the efficiency of our current welfare system. Currently, for persons to receive the different types of needs-based assistance from the government, they have to go through multiple levels of overlapping agencies to apply for each of these benefits individually. This time-consuming task is compounded by the difficulty of navigating the byzantine system of programs and bureaucracy currently in place.⁵ The savings on administrative costs alone, I believe, would be substantial. Another aspect of welfare efficiency that a UBI would enhance is the elimination of so called “poverty traps”.⁶ Poverty traps are created when there is a disincentive for people to increase their income because of the corresponding loss of benefits. Because a UBI is universal, income is in no way tied to the amount of money one is entitled to. No one would have to choose between a larger paycheck or larger benefits. These observations are enough to claim that a UBI would be more efficient than the current needs-based assistance system that we have today.

During this essay, as I did above, there are times when I will be making claims about the feasibility and sustainability of certain programs or policies. When I do so, I will be comparing the projected cost of these programs in relation to the current tax rates and expected revenue from those taxes. This does not rule out the possibility that a program I think is too expensive or

⁴ Flowers, Andrew. “What Would Happen If We Just Gave People Money?”. Fivethirtyeight. <http://fivethirtyeight.com/features/universal-basic-income/>

⁵ Welfare Chart. House Ways and Means Committee. <http://waysandmeans.house.gov/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/WM-Welfare-Chart-AR-amendment-110215-jpeg.jpg>

⁶ Flowers, “What Would Happen If We Just Gave People Money?”

unsustainable would be so under a different, more expansive, system of taxation. In this essay, I will err on the side of more conservative financial claims. I don't make guesses about the behavioral or macroeconomic shifts that would occur with different tax rates. For this reason, I will use our current tax revenue as a measure of affordability.

That being said, there is good reason to believe that this sort of program is financially feasible. Allan Sheahen put out an estimate of how the program would be structured and how much it would cost. Under these estimates, the program would pay to each adult 18 and older \$12,000 a year, or \$1000 a month. In addition, those families with children would be paid \$4,000 per child. Although this estimate factors in the cuts to existing needs-based assistance programs, it preserves Social Security. In lieu of a UBI payment, those who are disabled or 65 years and older would continue to receive their Social Security payment. After factoring program cuts, a UBI program described above would cost approximately 1.5 trillion dollars per year.⁷ Sheahen gives a number of tax increases that would cover this cost, including closing tax loopholes, a Value Added Tax, and a general increase in the income tax. Although I am not making the case that increasing these taxes can easily be done, I do think that this estimate shows that a UBI is not as unfeasible as it may seem.

Although I believe there is a lot of practical good that a UBI can do, this will not be the focus of my essay. Instead, I wish to focus on the philosophical aspects of justifying a UBI. I will start by diagnosing the problems with our current system of distribution that justify redistribution. Then, I argue that we should consider redistribution framed by Karl Widerquist's conception of freedom. I will go on to explain how we should fund a UBI society along with how funds might be

⁷ Allan Sheahen. "It's Time to Think BIG! How to Simplify the Tax Code and Provide Every American with a Basic Income Guarantee" Feb 2006.. <http://www.usbig.net/papers/144-Sheahen-RefundableTaxCredit.pdf>

justly collected. I then spend the second half of my paper explaining why I believe these funds should be distributed in a way that is both basic and unconditional.

II. Historic Injustice

Any argument in favor of redistribution must show that the current distribution of resources is unjust, and thereby subject to legitimate methods of bringing about greater social and economic equality. Nozick in *Anarchy, State, and Utopia* makes some strong claims that I will challenge in order to show the unjustness of our current system. Nozick would say that, in order to judge whether our current system of distribution is just, it must be historically justified according to his entitlement theory and principles of justice. I will start by setting up and explaining the requirements Nozick says must be met if a pattern of distribution is just. Then, I will show how our current system of distribution fails Nozick's requirements for the principle of just holdings.

Nozick identified three requirements for the justice of possession, or holdings, and transfer that would need to be satisfied in order for the entire system to be just. If the world were wholly just, the following definition would exhaustively cover the subject of justice in holdings. "[First,] a person who acquires a holding in accordance with the principle of justice in acquisition is entitled to that holding. [Second,] a person who acquires a holding in accordance with the principle of justice in transfer, from someone else entitled to the holding, is entitled to the holding. [Third,] No one is entitled to a holding except by (repeated) applications of 1 and 2."⁸ If these principles of just holdings and transfer were respected, and were continually respected across time, then the current system of distribution we have, the result of a long history of

⁸ Nozick, Robert. *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*. (New York: Basic Books, 1974). 151

respecting principles of holdings, would be just. This is Nozick's entitlement theory of justice, which says that whether a distribution is just depends on how it came about. Nozick thinks that rather than appealing to some moral principle of distribution, "A distribution is just if it arises from another just distribution by legitimate means."⁹ In fact, changing a system of distribution that consistently respects principles of holding may violate the liberty of those with just holdings. Nozick's famous argument for this is the 'Wilt Chamberlain' example:

"Let us suppose... this distribution D_1 ; perhaps everyone has an equal share.... Now suppose that Wilt Chamberlain is greatly in demand by basketball teams, being a great gate attraction.... He signs the following sort of contract with the team: In each home game, twenty-five cents from the price of each ticket of admission goes to him.... Let us suppose that in one season one million persons attend his home games, and Wilt Chamberlain winds up with \$250,000, a much larger sum than the average income and larger even than anyone else has. Is he entitled to this income? Is this new distribution D_2 , unjust? If so, why? There is *no* question about whether each of the people was entitled to the control over the resources they held in D_1 ; because that was the distinction that was assumed was acceptable. Each of these persons chose to give twenty-five cents of their money to Chamberlain. [T]hey all, at least one million of them, converged on giving it to Wilt Chamberlain in exchange for watching him play basketball. If D_1 was a just distribution, and people voluntarily moves from it to D_2 , transferring parts of their shares they were given under D_1 , isn't D_2 also just?"¹⁰

Although this is only a snapshot of how entitlement theory might be observed in the real world, it does make a strong case that the justness of a system of distribution must be evaluated in a historic framework. Through this historic principle, Nozick believes the entitlement theory of justice might be able to justify the extreme levels of wealth inequality we find today.

However, if Nozick's entitlement theory is based on the principles of just holdings, there is strong evidence that the current system of distribution we have, which I'll name D_x is unjust

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid. 161-2

because of past violations of the principles of just holdings. In addition, since arguing that our current system of distribution D_x is just requires that all former systems of distribution before D_x are likewise just, any violations of principles of holding further along the chain of historic distributions, from an initial distribution of D_0 (of all property held in common) through D_x would require us to accept that the current state of distribution is unjust. I believe there is substantial evidence that challenges the idea that the current system of distribution is just.

In order to make these arguments, I will start by referencing a story told by Matt Zwolinski that broadly illustrates the point that our current system of distribution is unjust because of past injustices:

Adam, a Native American, and George, an American of European descent, encounter each other on the street. Adam sees that George is carrying a shiny new iPad 3. So Adam clubs George over the head with a stick and takes it.

George: 'Ow! Give that back!'

Adam: 'No.'

George: 'But that's mine! You just took it from me.'

Adam: 'Look. A lot of stuff has happened in the past. I took your iPad. Your ancestors took my ancestors' land. My ancestors took somebody else's ancestors' land. It's all terribly complicated.'

George: 'But you took my iPad. Just now.'

Adam: 'Do you really want to go back to the beginning of time and sort out all the injustices of history? That's impossible.'

George: 'I just want my iPad back. And an ice pack.'

Adam: 'So you want to correct the injustices that have happened in the last five minutes, but ignore the ones that happened prior to that? That's arbitrary. The only non-arbitrary approach is to start fresh from where we are. I'm sorry I took your iPad. I see now that respect for property rights is important. So let's try to be better about enforcing them. Life, liberty, and property...starting now!'

George, stepping toward Adam: 'Look, buddy. Just give me the damn iPad.'

Adam: 'Ack! Help! I'm being aggressed against!'¹¹

This dynamic of exchange between George and Adam could be seen between any two groups of people with different religion, ethnicity, or class. In particular, the inequality between Native Americans and those of European descent who took the native lands show the starkest example of how past violations of the principle of holdings are responsible for systematic inequality. This power dynamic is the result of past violations of the principles of holding. I think there is a prima facie case that all land taken by those Americans of European descent, or taken through the system of government created by those Americans, violates Nozick's justice of holdings. One need only look to the examples of Wounded Knee, the Trail of Tears, or the Reservations on which all remaining native tribes are herded to see that this is the case. The degree of injustice is hard to measure in dollars. As a point of reference, the federal government paid \$3.4 billion in reparations for the Department of the Interior "failing to account for and provide revenue from a trust fund representing the value of Indian assets managed by the government."¹² One could only imagine that reparations for land and suffering would be much higher than this amount. Of course in the context of America, Native Americans aren't the only group who have had their holdings violated. Dalton Conley wrote in *The New York Times* that reparations for slavery could be repaid by transferring, "13 percent of white household wealth to blacks. A two-adult black family would receive an average reparation of about \$35,000."¹³ These two examples give an idea of the monetary loss linked with unjust acquisition.

¹¹ Matt, Zwolinski. "Libertarianism...Starting Now!" (Bleeding Heart Libertarians, 2012). <http://bleedingheartlibertarians.com/2012/03/libertarianism-starting-now/>

¹² CNN Wire Staff. "U.S. finalizes \$3.4 billion settlement with American Indian". CNN. <http://www.cnn.com/2012/11/26/politics/american-indian-settlement/>

¹³ Conley, Dalton. "The Cost of Slavery. New York Times. <http://www.nytimes.com/2003/02/15/opinion/the-cost-of-slavery.html>

America is not alone in transgressing against the principle of just holdings. The Conquistadors of Spain conquering South America and the European colonization of Asia, Africa, and Australia both are huge examples of the forceful and unjust transfer of holdings from native people who have some property claim to the land to those using force to seize those lands. The injustice of holdings extends past these racial transgressions. Warlords, Kings, and Holy men through time have used force to take the property of those who have a rightful claim to it. The constant, world-wide violations of people's rights to their holdings show that the current system of distribution we have cannot be justified historically.

However, the example of George and Adam also shows the problems with trying to correct these past transgressions. These problems are both very apparent when compared to what would be required for rectification. Nozick was not oblivious to transgressions of holdings, and outlined a principle of rectification that could be used to correct past injustices while remaining consistent with his other principles.

“This principle uses historic information about previous situations and injustices done in them, and information about the actual course of events that flowed from these injustices, until the present, and it yields a description (or descriptions) of holding in the society. The principle of rectification presumably will make use of its best estimate of subjective information about what would have occurred (or a probability distribution over what might have occurred, using the expected value) if the injustice had not taken place. If the actual description of holdings turns out not to be one of the descriptions yielded by the principle, then one of the descriptions yielded must be realized.”¹⁴

¹⁴ Nozick. *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*. 152-3

I believe that this principle would require us to know much more information about past transgressions than anyone could ever gather.

In his writings, Nozick really never explains or explores this concept of rectification in depth. So, I will advance two conceptions of this principle, the stronger and weaker versions, and consider whether either of these interpretations is possible in practice. Despite how it is interpreted, Nozick's principle of rectification requires too much, even if we consider weaker interpretations of it.

I believe that a strong interpretation of Nozick's principle would require that we identify past transgression on an individual level. That is to say, we must figure out who owes what to whom. Trying to find over the tens of thousands of years of human history who transgressed against whom in an effort to sort out past injustice would be, on its face, impossible. It would require that we know a complete account of what injustices were committed and when. We would also need to figure out how much a person was harmed or helped by each transgression, and in what specific way this has harmed or helped, and to what degree, those who are alive today. We simply do not have enough information to make the sort of determination necessary for a holistic principle of rectification.

A weaker interpretation of Nozick's principle might say that all that is required is an aggregative rectification of past injustice. Perhaps we could specify groups of people, such as women or minorities, which were traditionally transgressed against and figure a general idea of what is owed to these groups as a whole. Rather than focusing on person-to-person harms, we would rather be satisfied with group-to-group transgressions. Pushing aside concerns that an aggregative conception of the principle of rectification might disenfranchise some individuals, this conception fails for the same reason the holistic principle of rectification fails. The intuitive listings of groups who might be owed, in the aggregate, some holdings from some other groups

might themselves be past transgressors of the principle of holdings. As anecdotal evidence, it seems intuitive that in the aggregate principle of rectification those of Spanish descent might owe something to those ancestors of Aztecs, whose lands were taken by the Spanish. Yet, the Aztecs themselves were transgressors against other, earlier, native societies who themselves might have taken it from even earlier societies. Any particular group we consider to have been historically transgressed against might have been, and probably were, past transgressors themselves. So, the aggregative principle of rectification fails for the same information-limited reasons the holistic principle of rectification failed.

Stepping away from the different interpretations of Nozick's principle of rectification, there is another problem with rectification that I wish to address. Even if we could figure out, to some extent, what system of property transfer would satisfy a principle of rectification, we would transgress on those whose property is transferred away. To simply transfer a plot of land from one person to another would discount the value the transgressor added to the forcefully taken plot of land. David Schmidtz gives the best explanation for this;

Philosophers writing about original appropriation tend to speak as if people who arrive first are luckier than those who come later. The truth is, first appropriators begin the process of resource creation; latecomers get most of the benefits. Consider America's first permanent English settlement, the Jamestown colony of 1607... Was their situation better than ours? How so? They were never caught in rush-hour traffic jams, of course. For that matter, they never worried about being overcharged for car repairs. They never awoke in the middle of the night to the sound of noisy refrigerators, leaky faucets, or even flushing toilets. They never wasted a minute at airports waiting for delayed flights. They never had to change a light bulb. They never agonized over the choice among cellular telephone companies. They never faced the prospect of a dentist's drill; after their teeth fell out, in their thirties, they could subsist for a while on liquids. Life was simple.¹⁵

¹⁵ David, Schmidtz. "The Institution of Property". (Social Philosophy and Policy. Cambridge University Press), 5.

So, to transfer plots of land around would not be a precise enough solution to rectify past injustices by creating new injustices against those descendants of transgressors who built something from that unjustly acquired land.

So after examination, any attempts to propose a principle of rectification are frustrated by the lack of ability to gather enough information to justly rectify past injustices. In addition, the argument offered in David Schmidtz' shows that it's not clear that even if we could figure out all this information, the demands of justice would require us to redistribute unjustly held lands. Yet, we have also found that merely giving up because we cannot find a principle of rectification is unacceptable because of the injustice in our current system of distribution. I will chart out a course from here about what we are to do. First, though, I wish to talk about a normative theory that will frame the formation of a UBI society. After the failure to establish a robust conception of Nozick's principle of rectification, we must find a new standard to solve our unjust system of distribution.

III. ECSO Freedom

Now that we have established that the current distribution of resources is not historically justifiable, we can see the warrant for redistribution. However, we are left with the question of how best to do this, and how to define what "best" is. To start, I will explain Widerquist's objections to Philippe Van Parijs' conception of Real-Freedom For All. This will serve as a starting point. Then I will introduce an idea that Karl Widerquist calls Freedom as Effective Control Self-Ownership, or ECSO Freedom. This will be followed by the counter argument that ECSO Freedom exploits those have to fund a UBI. In the end, I find that ECSO Freedom is a cogent idea of freedom which leads us to supporting a UBI.

Philippe Van Parijs is another philosopher who writes on the subject of a Universal Basic Income. Parijs argues that society should guarantee people real freedom, the freedom to live according to an individual conception of the good life. Parijs believes the best way to guarantee real freedom is to provide a Universal Basic Income.

Van Parijs argues that the more resources people have available, the freer they are to do whatever they might want to do. The highest sustainable Universal Basic Income gets everyone access to as many resources as possible and leaves them free to do whatever they might want to do with those resources - Even if what they want to do is pursue leisure.¹⁶

Widerquist does not believe that the arguments for “real freedom” are enough to support a UBI. I generally concur with this. Although I disagree with Van Parijs’ idea of “real freedom, I wanted to use Van Parijs’ argument to frame the discussion on ECSO Freedom. Later in this paper I will appeal to arguments made by Van Parijs to frame how we think about funding a UBI. None of those later arguments will rely on a conception of “real freedom”.

Widerquist has two objections to the idea that arguing for Real Freedom For All (RFFA) is sufficient to justify a UBI society. The first objection is that RFFA is a vague idea that does not lend itself to a particular policy. A UBI gives people the freedom to do certain things they would want to do, but other forms of government spending can give people the freedom to do other things they would want to do. Paying for a UBI at the expense of other programs might constrict the freedom of some. A smaller income combined with other sorts of government spending, like guaranteeing a job or paying for extensive infrastructure, can give people the freedom to do things they wouldn’t do in a UBI society. These different approaches create different types of

¹⁶ Karl Widerquist. “Why We Demand a Basic Income”. Excerpt from *Basic Income*. (John Wiley & Sons. 2013), 32.

freedom, but it's not clear from Van Parijs' writing how we can determine which type of freedom is better. Van Parijs does make the claim that more freedom is preferable to less freedom, but he does nothing to say how society ought to choose from among different freedoms. For this reason, Widerquist does not think that RFFA necessitates a UBI society.

The second objection that Widerquist brings up is the argument from exploitation. “[W]orkers are needed to produce the income that will be distributed unconditionally. If recipients are not held to a reciprocal obligation to help produce that income, they supposedly exploit the workers who do.”¹⁷ Van Parijs answers this objection by arguing that RFFA entails a liberal neutrality between different conceptions of the good life. Van Parijs thinks the choice of whether or not to work depends on one conception of the good life, and a government should remain neutral between conceptions of the good life. However, Widerquist argues, “the reciprocity objection is not simply based on a desire to promote one version of the good life. It is based on a moral claim to resources. If one part has earned the right to use resources while another party refuses to do what is necessary to earn that right, neutrality is no reason to treat them both equally.”¹⁸ So, Van Parijs does not explain why those who refuse to acquire resources should be entitled to them. I believe that Widerquist's conception of ECSO freedom can provide that answer.

Karl Widerquist wrote that a just society would recognize ECSO Freedom. ECSO Freedom is a principle that sets the terms of what can be considered legitimate cooperation. ECSO Freedom is the effective power to accept or refuse active cooperation with other willing people. ECSO Freedom entails the effective, and not merely nominal right, to exercise self-ownership. One passively cooperates with other people if they are willing to stay out of the

¹⁷ Ibid. 33

¹⁸ Ibid., 33

other's way. So, as long as some third party to a transaction does not interfere with that transaction, they are passively cooperating with the transaction. For any people engaged in active cooperation, they must have the effective power to refuse to participate in the interaction. If all people have this power to refuse active cooperation, it is possible for all active human cooperation to be voluntary.

ECSO Freedom would have two components. First, persons must be freely able to interact and associate with other willing people as they see fit. A prerequisite for this is that people cannot be forced to serve the interest of others. "To have this first component a person must have the familiar civil rights of freedom of speech, movement, association, political participation, and so on."¹⁹ These are the rights that would be most similar to the rights guaranteed under the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. This includes the power to freely associate with whomever you wish, and to congregate with like-minded people.

The second component of ECSO Freedom is that, "a person must have the effective power to refuse unwanted cooperation."²⁰ Although this seems to be an extension of the social freedom of cooperation that the first component protects, it also has economic implications. Humans have a biological need for food, water, and air to survive. They also need shelter, a place to sleep, and a place to exist. If someone were to get in the way between you and the minimum amount of resources you need to survive, they can force you to do almost anything. For millions of years of human history, this scenario was never an issue. People were free to hunt and gather and move away from people they no longer wished to cooperate with. Access to the resources needed to secure one's own existence were never restricted. However, in a modern economy, this is no longer the case. As Widerquist writes, "Most people reach

¹⁹ Ibid. 34

²⁰ Ibid. 34

adulthood with no direct access to the resources they need, they can only obtain resources by meeting conditions set by others - by employers or governments. They only have the nominal right to refuse but they do not have the effective power to refuse... They cannot work for themselves; they can only work for a property owner or a government."²¹ There is an entire class of people who do not have the ability to refuse unwanted cooperation with employers or governments. Those without the means to secure their own survival are forced to participate in unwanted cooperation. Without such access, persons would be in a position where they must enter unwanted cooperation with others in order to get the resources needed to survive. These propertyless people don't have the effective right to refuse unwanted cooperation, and so do not have an effective right to ESCO Freedom. Widerquist recognizes this problem and thinks that in order to be in a position to refuse unwanted cooperation; people must have unconditional access to the resources necessary for survival and self-continuation in the form of a UBI.

I believe that a UBI supported by a respect for ESCO Freedom is sufficient to answer the objections that Van Parijs' RFFA cannot. Widerquist raised two objections to RFFA, the first questioning how RFFA justified a UBI, and secondly questioning how a UBI would not be exploitative. I will dedicate the rest of my essay to showing how a respect for ESCO Freedom justifies a UBI. Briefly though, I will show how a UBI established on the principle of ESCO Freedom does not fall to the same exploitation argument.

Widerquist makes the case that it is not the taxpayers who fund a UBI that are being exploited, but rather that not funding a UBI would be exploitative of those who deserve it. "All an able-bodied individual needs from others to have ESCO freedom is a negative duty, a duty of forbearance. Others need only refrain from interfering with a sufficient amount of resources so

²¹ Ibid. 35

that individuals can provide for themselves.”²² However, in a modern state where all resources are held by either government or private hands, our society is failing that duty. A UBI is meant to be a replacement for the direct access to resources that our ancestors enjoyed. Without a UBI, “Those who control resources are currently held to no reciprocal duty to compensate the propertyless for the loss of freedom created by the assignment of property rights over natural resources to some individual and not others.”²³ This line of reasoning turns the exploitation argument into a reason *for* establishing a UBI. Unless property owners pay a rent sufficient to fund a UBI, they exploit the propertyless by forcing them to work for the same group of property owners whose claim of that property interferes with their efforts to provide for themselves.

The sphere of cooperation that ECSO Freedom applies to is not limited to person-to-person interactions, but also includes cooperation between citizen and government. However, it is this sort of cooperation that seems to be involuntary. Governments can force their citizens to pay taxes and to conform to their laws. By forcing people to pay taxes to fund a UBI, they are forcing citizens into cooperation. The money for the UBI has to come from somewhere. Suppose that a person doesn't want to cooperate in the form of tax payments. Although they might be voluntarily engaging in transactions with others, they are not voluntarily paying taxes. Although this cooperation wouldn't be exploitative, as explained above, it still would violate ECSO Freedom. The individual does not have the effective right to refuse to cooperate with their government, because they cannot refuse to pay taxes.

I would argue that this sort of cooperation in a UBI society is still completely voluntary. It is important to state the role that government plays in creating a UBI. The government plays the role of collecting dues, and distributing dues, owed by people when they take resources from

²² Ibid. 36

²³ Ibid. 36

the common. When people pay taxes like the income tax and property tax, they are paying to others, through the government, a value commensurate for the goods that they take out of the common. When they pay taxes, like sales taxes or service taxes, they are paying dues on those items and services which could only have been developed by taking things out of the common. People voluntarily cooperate with the government insofar as they pay dues to others through what they take from the common. In this sense, paying taxes is a voluntary activity that people can refuse to do. People are free to interact or to refuse cooperation as often or as infrequently as they like. So they pay as little or as much they want commensurate with the resources they take out of the common. Not all transactions would be taxed through, and I outline the exceptions to the rule later in my paper. Activities such as giving gifts to one another, or a parent feeding their child, are such exceptions. These are the sorts of transaction that encapsulate activities that are done without taking from the common. For example, although a parent “takes from the common” when they buy groceries and pay a sales tax, giving that food to their children takes no additional resources from the common. These exceptions help define the role of taxes in a UBI society. Taxes are merely the collection of dues for taking resources out of the common. So, it seems like person-to-government cooperation is completely voluntary.

So, we can see that a society that respects a conception of ECSO Freedom should be committed to ensuring that its members have the effective right to refuse unwanted cooperation. We have seen that a UBI society grounded in the idea of ECSO Freedom deals with the argument from exploitation in a way that RFFA couldn't. Payment of a UBI is merely repayment for those who have taken resources that everyone has some claim to out of the common. The government's role is to collect dues owed to others and distribute them. In this way, government taxes do not force taxpayers into involuntary cooperation. From here, I will move on to better define what dues are owed by those who have taken land from common use.

IV. Creating a UBI society

Up until this point, I have shown that the current system of distribution is unjust, and that resources need to be redistributed. In this last section, I have defined the idea of ECSO Freedom. And I have also shown that if we want a society that respects ECSO Freedom, that our current system is inadequate for this purpose. Now, I'll discuss how ECSO Freedom might be socially guaranteed for all. I start from the premise that the land of a country is held in common. I then argue that the external resources of the land held in common should be distributed in order to guarantee ECSO Freedom. After this, I then consider how society ought to sustainably redistribute its goods to guarantee ECSO Freedom. I conclude that a society that does its best to sustainably adhere to observing ECSO Freedom would be an Unconditional Basic Income society.

In his book *Real Freedom for All*, Philippe Van Parijs writes about the justification for funding a UBI society. Parijs starts from the idea that the land of any country is initially held in common. I find that this premise is similar to Widerquist's premise that people have some right to access unrestricted resources from the common. Since everyone would need to have some access to either private property or unowned land, I think Widerquist would be sympathetic to the idea that everyone has some claim to the land in total. Since nothing could be created except by taking from the commons, people are justifiably entitled to some extent to all external goods. External goods are all external means that affect people's capacity to pursue their conception of the good life, and which are produced from the common land. Even those who have invented or created something could only have done so by using some of the pool of external resources. Thought they might have a claim to a fair amount of their product, they are

not entitled to the whole fruits of their labor. So, people are entitled to all external goods, even those which may be the result of purely private enterprise.

To start, all rents on land and natural resources would go into this common pool of resources. Yet, Parijs' and my own definition of external resources extends beyond this. These resources, which I define next, will go into what I call the *external resource slush fund*.²⁴ The funding for a UBI would ultimately come from this fund. I will now define which external resources should go into this slush fund, and then rule out which resources I think shouldn't be included.

Parijs recognizes that a fund solely from revenue on land taxes would be too small and would leave us with little chance for the tax revenue necessary to fund a UBI. However, just as people are entitled to some part of the external resources resulting from the use of those lands, the government is likewise entitled to tax some of the external resources created from the use of those lands. These are the resources I will now define.

I think that jobs are a good resulting from the common land that can justifiably be taxed. Let us assume that there is a society with underemployment and involuntary unemployment (one need not try too hard). Van Parijs thinks these conditions create a world where it is assumed that the labor market tends not to clear because of obstacles to perfect competition or social conditions which lead to involuntary unemployment. In this world, Parijs advocates that we should treat jobholders as rent holders.²⁵ "The holding of jobs constitutes another type of

²⁴ When I say that an external resources goes into the pool of common resources, what I am advocating for is that a tax be levied on those goods that would go towards funding the UBI society. For instance, a tax on rents of land and natural resources would include property, estate, and sales tax on those resources. As for how extensive the tax should be, I would say that these resources should be taxed to the highest possible tax yield, or the laffer hyperplane.

²⁵ Here, I reject the conventional economic definition of rent. Rent is usually defined as profits made from non-productive inputs, such as rent of land. However, from here I will define rent as profit made off of external resources, which includes land rents but extends to rents collected off of holding scarce jobs.

resource (Separate from wealth and skill)... [and] let us give each member of society a tradable entitlement to an job [much in the same way people are entitled to shares of external resources.]”²⁶ Those jobs are external resources because they would allow people to pursue their conception of a good life. Since we live in this world with involuntary unemployed, those who hold jobs are collecting rent from that job. As an additional consideration, those that are involuntarily unemployed are not able to get the resources they would need to survive. If they lived in a world where the land was held in common, they would have this sort of access. But those that are voluntarily unemployed do not even have the chance to enter into involuntary cooperation for survival. Instead, they are left with no options or access to resources. These two considerations make the case that some portion of the income of that job ought to be taxed as an external resource, with those taxes apportioned to the external resources slush fund.

Besides land and jobs, there are other external resources that must be recognized. However, I will lump these resources into the category of tax-free external resources, because for different reasons, I do not believe that they should be taxed. The remaining categories of external goods are technological knowledge, public goods, and gifts, all of which Parijs also agrees shouldn't be taxed. Gifts can be defined as items of small value that are given freely from one person to another. This could be anything from a Mother's day present to a beer for a coworker. Parijs thinks that these small items would be prohibitively costly to regulate and correct. “One might want to point out that the figures mentioned take no account of a very large number of small gifts... But it would no doubt be silly to try to seize such gifts in order to finance a higher basic income, basically because the administrative cost of monitoring them would be

²⁶ Parijs, Philippe Van. *Real Freedom for All: What (if Anything) Can Justify Capitalism?* (Oxford: Clarendon Press), 1995. 108

prohibitive.”²⁷ I agree with this assessment. In addition, these are the sorts of transaction that encapsulate activities that are done without taking from the common. Giving an item that has already been taxed to another does not in any way additionally take from the common pool of resources. For instance, Activities such as giving gifts to one another, or a parent feeding their child, are such such activities that are exempt from taxation. For an example that was mentioned earlier, although a parent “takes from the common” when they buy groceries and pay a sales tax, giving that food to their children takes no additional resources from the common. These exceptions help define the role of taxes in a UBI society. This role precludes the taxing of person to person transfer of gifts.

Parijs likewise does not believe that either public goods, like public parks or the military, or technological advances, like electricity, should be taxed, because they are already distributed fairly. As Parijs says, “What justified the payment was a concern to equalize the resources each has for pursuing his conception of the good life...”²⁸ Even though these resources could only have been created by taking from the common pool of resources, both public goods and technological advances benefit people as a whole. This is by definition the case for public goods, and certainly this category of external goods is in general equally accessible. In the case of technology, Parijs says, “Because these technologies are, as such, freely available, are they not part of a basic income in kind, along with the air we breathe or the streets we use? It would then be pointless to embark on the arduous task of estimating their... competitive value, since they are already given equally to all.”²⁹ Van Parijs is not claiming that everyone the world over has benefitted from technological advances equally. There are, after all, still plenty of places

²⁷ Philippe Van Parijs. “Why Surfers should be Fed: The Liberal Case for an Unconditional Basic Income.” *Philosophy and Public Affairs*. (Wiley Publications).1991. 117

²⁸ *Ibid.* 120

²⁹ *Ibid.* 119

without the modern conveniences we enjoy. I believe here that Van Parijs is making the point that everyone in a country would enjoy the benefits of technological advances about equally relative to other members of that same country. Even if they do not have the specific goods that we associate with advanced technology, they benefit indirectly from its existence. Just like public goods, technological goods are available to everyone from any one society and benefit everyone in that society relatively equally. For this reason, there is no need to tax public goods or technological advances.

Now that there is a list of which external resources should be taxed, we must find out how to distribute this external resource slush fund. I believe that this slush fund should be distributed in the form of an Unconditional Basic Income. There are two necessary components of an Unconditional Basic Income: a UBI is both *unconditional* and *basic*. It is unconditional in that there are neither requirements that must be met nor conditions that must be fulfilled to qualify for this program. It is basic in the sense that the UBI is distributed through regular cash payments rather than a bundle of goods. I will briefly defend why the external resource slush fund should be distributed in a way that is both unconditional and basic. Then, I will consider two objections that challenge these two conditions.

The reason why the external resource slush fund should be distributed unconditionally appeals to this idea that everyone has a common claim to the land and the external resources that derive from that land. Since, as I have said, person-to-person transfers that a principle of rectification would require are impossible to calculate, it couldn't be said with any certainty that anyone should be cut off from this slush fund. Even those billionaires and millionaires who seem at face value to have benefited from the current system of distribution should not be cut off from this slush fund. They are afforded access to this fund because it would be impossible to say that they haven't been aggrieved in a way that prevented their fortunes from growing faster than it

already had. This extreme scenario, where billionaires receive transfers from the government, show the difficulty of person-to-person rectification for historic injustices and how committed we must be to our ignorance on that subject. For this reason, I can say that any transfers from the external resource slush fund should be unconditional.

The slush fund payment should likewise be basic, and so should establish a minimum floor of existence. For people to be considered to have a right to ECSO freedom, it must be socially guaranteed. A part of a social guarantee to ECSO freedom is that, everyone should be guaranteed the means of survival while preserving the right to refuse unwanted cooperation. I believe these conditions can be socially guaranteed by the existence of a UBI society. If every adult were paid a fixed sum from the taxes collected, I believe the program could guarantee ECSO freedom and all that the freedom entails. Since it provides a minimum floor of existence and guarantees survival, no one would be forced by their circumstances and the needs of survival into unwanted cooperation. This argument and the preceding one lead us to the conclusion that slush fund payments should be both unconditional and basic. This is the foundation of an Unconditional Basic Income society.

Before analyzing this idea further, I want to dedicate a small section to the question of public goods. I do not believe that it is inconsistent with any normative premises established in this idea that some of the external resources slush fund should be reapportioned from the UBI to fund public works. One powerful purpose of government is to guide collective action as a way to deal with a lot of the redundancies and waste created when these actions are left to individual initiative. For the most part, there is no normative calling stemming from ECSO that I can appeal to that creates a duty for government to direct these collective actions. I instead appeal to the Rawlsian/Nozickian idea that there are some goods that all rational people would agree to fund, and that the government is in its right to insure for all people. From here, utilitarian

considerations make it appealing that government - which can insure the creation of public works for cheaper than individuals could - ought to insure those public goods so that as much money as possible for other activities done with the UBI.

To start, instruments of formal freedom that protect the first condition of ECSO freedom need to be funded for ECSO freedom to be socially guaranteed. Remember, in order to satisfy the first component of ECSO Freedom, certain institutions need to be funded by society; properly functioning voting mechanisms must exist so that people have the right to vote; a system of easily accessible laws and access to arbitration must also exist. These would all be funded from the external resource slush fund. In addition, institutions that protect the right to security, such as the army and the police force, would likewise be funded for the same reasons.

Public goods that provide a positive externality, like education and infrastructure, should be funded. Parijs offers an additional reason why this should be, "Diverting public funds to finance such items would none the less be legitimate from a real-libertarian standpoint, to the extent that it would foster productivity to such an extent that the net effect on the highest level of basic income the society could durably afford would be positive."³⁰ Here, he is saying the effects of these items on people's incomes would be such that they would cover the costs of these items and as well as increase external resource slush fund. This is another utilitarian consideration in favor of providing these public goods. Using the logic that explains why government should fund an army, education and infrastructure would be two of the goods which rational people would agree to let the government guarantee to all of its citizens. Although funding these goods takes away from the UBI fund, ultimately the externalities they create would most likely have a net positive increase of the external resource slush fund.

³⁰ Parijs. *Real Freedom for All: What (if Anything) Can Justify Capitalism?* 43

As a final note, the list of external resources that ought to be taxed is not an exclusive and all-encompassing list. Nor are the type of taxes strictly limited to those I have enumerated. It is entirely compatible with ECSO freedom that a UBI society might levy taxes in order to solve problems that are best solved by collective action, like climate change. The list of taxable external goods is merely a list of taxes which at a minimum ought to be levied. With that being said, let us consider a number of objections.

V. Why Should Philosophers be Fed?

In this section, I want to raise an objection that Edmund Phelps raised in the Parijs anthology “What is wrong with a free lunch?” on the subject of the UBI. Phelps challenges this idea that society owes something to those who are voluntarily unemployed. Phelps builds on what Rawls has said on the problem of the hypothetical “Malibu Surfer” - an unambitious surfer who doesn't work - to question whether we can consider people who do not contribute or participate in society to be part of that society.³¹ First, I will try to expand on Phelps's concerns, then I will counter this objection by arguing that moral membership in a society does not mean employment in that society. Then, I will present a possible compromise that could satisfy those who do not believe that those who do not work should receive any UBI payments.

To help frame this discussion, let me start by asking “why should philosophers be fed?” Imagine a philosopher Jeff. Jeff does not have a job, nor does he have any family to take care of. Jeff's only desire in life is to read and write philosophy. In a non-UBI world, Jeff would be forced to pick up a job in order to sustain both his physical needs and reading habit. However, in

³¹ Rawls and Van Parijs both use this example of the unemployed Malibu surfer who does not work yet still collects a UBI. For this paper, I have ensued this example and have switched to the example of the unemployed philosopher.

a UBI world, the money paid as part of this program is enough to ensure Jeff's survival and keep a steady stream of books available without having to work at a job. In order to pursue his passion in a UBI world, Jeff chooses not to work and instead to live as a modern day Socrates. This situation, I believe, creates a very intuitive response for those who pay taxes. Why should they have to work to support themselves while losing some of their income to someone who contributes very little to society? I believe this intuition can be sharpened, and I turn to Phelps and Rawls to make the disgruntled taxpayer's case.

Phelps believes a UBI is contrary to America's value as a liberal republic. Following Rawls, Phelps says that society is a cooperative enterprise in which individuals come together to participate in its interactive economy and for the purposes of mutual private gain. This naturally runs contrary to the unproductive Malibu surfer or the unemployed philosopher. Phelps thinks that Rawls would not extend economic justice for those who won't help themselves. He thinks that the social surplus, the value left after mutual and beneficial exchanges, can be distributed, but only to those who contribute to society. Rather than distributing the taxes collected as a basic income, Phelps thinks that a subsidized wage idea, where distribution of external resources are tied to work, better fits Rawl's model of society. This idea has been put to use before in the Earned Income Tax Credit and needs-based assistance that have work requirements.

This idea that people who can work should only be entitled to help from government on the condition that they be productive is also echoed by Rawls. In his article "Basic Income and Social Justice: Why Philosophers Disagree," Parijs recounts a conversation he had with Rawls about a UBI society, and describes the problems that Rawls had with it. At first, it seems like Rawls might be very receptive towards a UBI. Rawls, too, has concerns about unequally distributed resources and proposes an index of primary goods, including wealth, power, and

social bases of self-respect. This index of primary goods would be distributed according to the Rawls' difference principle, the idea that inequalities could only exist in society such that it benefits the least well off members of society. The UBI looks like a program that would fit these criteria, "Yet, to my surprise, John Rawls himself did not agree. Over the breakfast table, he gently told me that, contrary to what the Difference Principle might indeed suggest, his own considered judgment was that Malibu surfers could not legitimately expect to have their way of life subsidized by public benefits."³² This apparent contradiction can be explained by further explaining what is considered part of Rawls' index of primary goods.

Referring back to the book "Real Freedom for All", Parijs explains why Rawls does not agree with a UBI. Rawls does not think that the voluntarily unemployed should be supported because he did not think that leisure should be considered a primary good. Those workers who are not working and spend their day in leisure are already getting a large amount of good from their freedom. A minimum wage worker would certainly be desirous of the time that an unemployed philosopher has. Rawls quantified the value of leisure, and thought the primary good index of those who are not working is equal to the least-advantaged part time worker. So, no extra consideration should be given to those who are voluntarily unemployed, since their leisure time is equal to the bundle of primary goods that a worker earns. Before I go on to answer this consideration, I believe there is a more practical concern that a work requirement would create.

An important part of the UBI society is that it's funding comes from cutting other needs-based assistance programs. It would be virtually impossible with the tax revenue we collect now to fund these programs and a UBI program at the same time. That being said, a lot of the

³² Basic income and social justice: Why philosophers disagree- Van Parijs pg. 3
<https://www.uclouvain.be/cps/ucl/doc/etes/documents/2009.Rowntree.pdf>

needs-based assistance programs are targeted towards those with special needs. People who through no fault of their own have problems working at a jobs - like single parents, the elderly, or those with handicapped mental and physical abilities - are given special treatment because of the place they hold in society. There are some people in society whose assistance shouldn't be tied to how much they work. By cutting needs-based assistance and instead funding a UBI with a work requirement, those people who society hold in special regard would be disenfranchised. If we are committed to the idea that a UBI is necessary to guarantee ECSO freedom, we would be taking away rights from those who couldn't and shouldn't work if we added a work requirement. For this reason, I do not think that monetary transfers to people should be distributed solely according to a work requirement.

I also argue that those people who are voluntarily unemployed deserve a UBI payment. I believe that a society that respects ECSO Freedom would not create a welfare system where payment is contingent on fulfilling certain work requirements. I believe that Widerquist's arguments for a UBI also give a good reason why the voluntarily unemployed should be given UBI as well. These reasons lead us to the conclusion that a UBI should be paid universally. Payment of the UBI should not be contingent on any sort of contribution from members of society. Merely by being born into a country, people deserve a UBI payment. A UBI is meant to be a replacement for the direct access to resources that our ancestors enjoyed. Without a UBI, "Those who control resources are currently held to no reciprocal duty to compensate the propertyless for the loss of freedom created by the assignment of property rights over natural resources to some individual and not others."³³ A UBI is a repayment by those that have used the resources of the commons to those who have some claim to those commons.

³³ Widerquist. "Why We Demand a Basic Income". 36

A person has a claim to part of the common regardless of their employment status, but rather because of the existence in society. Everyone, the voluntarily unemployed included, have some claim to the land in common merely because they are members of that society. Even our unproductive philosopher Jeff deserves UBI payments. Simply by existing in a society he has some claim to the land in common. This claim would exist whether Jeff decided to make productive use of that claim or not. Now, since we live in a society where all land is either claimed by private individuals or government, he is no longer effectively has this right. The government and its people owe something to Jeff as payment for the use of the land that Jeff has a claim to. Thousands of years ago, this claim would manifest itself in the right to hunt, gather, and exist wherever he wished. This claim would exist whether Jeff would have made use of it or not. For reasons made elsewhere in the paper, that claim now manifests as a claim to a UBI. And, just like thousands of years ago, that claim exists whether or not Jeff wants to take lands out of the common for personal use. In both cases, this claim to the land in common is not contingent on a desire or actual use of that land in common. Instead, that claim exists merely because a person is born into a country. So, working the land in the form of a job does not establish a claim to land, mere citizenship in a country does. This is why a UBI should not include a work requirement.

Despite my responses, I do feel that there may be legitimate concerns about people not working. The UBI program does nothing to promote working, and would cut those programs that do (such as the Earned Income Tax Credit). For people who think there ought to be some work requirement tied to benefit payments, I would suggest a type of UBI called a Negative Income Tax as a compromise. A Negative Income Tax (NIT) is a progressive income tax system where people earning below a certain amount receive a basic income from the government instead of paying taxes to the government. This is similar to the Earned Income Tax Credit, except that the

basic income of a NIT is unconditional and universal. Payment is not tied to number of children or relationship status like it is with an Earned Income Tax Credit. This pay is phased out as a person's income increases. To avoid creating a poverty trap, the basic income amount is phased out by one dollar for every two dollars a person earns. This program respects that everyone should have access to some guaranteed income. It combines this respect with proper incentives that might inspire people to work. I think this program would be a compromise program between a UBI and a work-based assistance program. It still guarantees ECSO Freedom through providing some minimum floor to existence. Ultimately, I think choosing between these two programs ought to be made on practical grounds. If studies shows that a UBI would decrease voluntary employment and productivity to the extent that it significantly reduces tax revenue, then a UBI would have to be abandoned. I think a respect for ECSO Freedom means that we ought to choose a program that best gives people the power to refuse unwanted cooperation. A necessary condition for any such program is that it has to be sustainable over time. Failure to create a sustainable program would hurt, not enhance, ECSO Freedom. I think the decision between these two programs would have to be made after further studies on the subject.

I believe I have shown here that a work requirement for a UBI would produce both undesirable results and would disenfranchise people from ECSO Freedom. A work requirement would force those who society says shouldn't work, like single parents and the elderly, to take jobs, an outcome that is undesirable. However, it is not only these people that shouldn't have to fulfill a work requirement to receive a UBI. I have also made the case that even those who are voluntarily unemployed deserve of a UBI. In regards to the NIT, I think that until more conclusive evidence is found to show the effects of a NIT, a UBI is preferable. However, because a UBI is a

payment for use of the land held in common, I do not think there should be a work requirement to receive a UBI.

VI. Why Not Socialism?

For my second objection, I will be considering whether a UBI is the best way to guarantee ECSO Freedom. Specifically, I will be considering whether ECSO Freedom is guaranteed better through the government universally providing specific goods for its people. I consider whether a society ought to establish a socialist system that universally provides specific tangible goods like healthcare, food, and rent, and college education.³⁴ This thinking is opposed to the UBI idea that society only has a duty towards its members to provide a lump sum payment, and the individual is left to buy goods as they see fit. I will first explain and expand upon this idea, then I'll show that there are certain practical advantages to just providing "generic goods" as opposed to universally promised services.

This objection would advance the idea that society has a duty to provide certain freedoms and rights. Rather than giving people the option to spend their income on "generic" goods perhaps ECSO freedom can be better secured by giving specific, enumerated goods to all citizens. By providing health care, education, food, etc., people would be given the goods they need to have the effective right to refuse unwanted cooperation. They are being compensated by those that make use of the common by being provided the resources those commons would hold, or by providing resources that are derived from the common, like education and health care. This might guarantee that everyone has the right to refuse unwanted

³⁴ A socialist system would also fund k-12 education, much for the same reason a UBI society would.

cooperation. There is nothing about a UBI that suggests that it has to go towards securing one's own survival. It is entirely possible that a person who receives a UBI could spend it all on non-essential items while forfeiting the security of survival of themselves and any dependents. This would be a subpar societal outcome. If people choose to fulfill their base pleasure and whims instead of guaranteeing their own survival, it looks like ECSO freedom would require us to provide a bundle of goods instead of the generic goods promised in a UBI society. If this objection held, it might force us to abandon the UBI in favor of a traditional needs-based assistance system, where certain goods are guaranteed by the state on an as-needed basis.

In answering this objection, I will bring up two concerns, both of which revolve around my practical economic constraints of providing all of these specific goods. With our current tax revenue, I believe that it would be financially unsustainable to universally guarantee all of these goods. The cost of providing universal health care, universal education (both K-12 and higher ed.), food, and rent would be much more than our current revenue. Although the estimates of providing all these goods vary, there are solid estimates that even the cost of universal health care by itself would be expensive.³⁵ It is estimated that the cost of universal health care would be \$15 trillion dollars over ten years, or an average of 1.5 trillion a year. You will recognize that this is the same as the projected cost of funding a UBI. Just the cost of providing universal health care alone would cost as much as funding my proposed system. This does not even take into consideration the additional cost of universal food provision, rent, and education. Although the costs of these are hard to estimate, they would certainly cost a fair amount of money. As mentioned before, this reason by itself does not rule out a socialist system, there are certainly

³⁵ Meckler, Laura. "Price Tag of Bernie Sanders's Proposals: \$18 Trillion". Wall Street Journal. <http://www.wsj.com/articles/price-tag-of-bernie-sanders-proposals-18-trillion-1442271511>

tax schemes that could cover the cost of this program. But, I believe the cost of providing this and other “essential” goods universally would be prohibitively costly relative to the cheaper UBI.

There is also a concern beyond funding the provision of these goods. There is also the problem that guaranteeing all these goods may create shortages. It seems we are inevitably bound by the laws of supply and demand. The government would not be able to guarantee enough goods at the competitive equilibrium price. In addition, any subsidies or price floors for certain essential goods would only further create shortages. Although this argument appeals to microeconomic theory, we can see real world consequences to price control. In the socialist state of Venezuela, price floors created by the government have led to severe rationing of food.³⁶ Supermarkets that would be full of produce are left bare because of the shortages price floors created. Price controls do not only lead to food shortages. Price ceilings on rent can lead to shortages of affordable housing.³⁷ This creates problems for the socialist system. A socialist system can lead to scenarios where essential goods are not guaranteed. If essential goods are not universally guaranteed, then it seems like ECSO Freedom is not guaranteed. So, because of the problems that price controls and shortages cause, there are scenarios where a socialist system cannot guarantee ECSO Freedom.

However, a free market distribution of goods also creates some problems. A system of distribution based on a free market distributes goods based on which consumers are best able to afford the prices given the supply. This necessarily benefits the rich who are able to afford higher prices, and means those without much income would be shut out from the marketplace of goods. The universality aspect of a UBI precludes excluding people from crucial goods because

³⁶ Woody, Christopher. “We want out of this agony’: What it’s like to eat in a country that’s on the verge of collapse” Business Insider. <http://www.businessinsider.com/venezuela-economic-food-crisis-meals-2016-4>

³⁷ Murphy, Robert P., “The Case Against Rent Control”. www.Fee.org.<https://fee.org/articles/the-case-against-rent-control/>

they don't have enough income. I am a partial believer in both government and free market distribution. I believe that a free market is an efficient method of distribution that keeps prices low and usually doesn't have problems with shortages. However, I share the idea that there are some goods and rights which shouldn't be distributed based on whose income is good enough to secure these goods. So, by giving everyone a UBI, everyone has access to the marketplace where they can buy their own goods like healthcare and education. Even if they choose not to buy these specific goods, people still have access to them should they desire it. This means no one would be prevented from participating in the market, while we are at the same time respecting the laws of supply and demand. Although this is a practical rather than normative argument, I think the normative goals of a society which respects ECSO Freedom are necessarily constricted by these practical concerns. If we were to set normative standards that are beyond our practical means to accomplish, society would no longer be able to guarantee ECSO Freedom. People would be able to buy their preferred rights, perhaps sacrificing the obtainment of one right for another superior one.

As a last consideration, I believe it is nearly impossible to know the bundle of goods that a person might want. I think Hayek in "The Use of Knowledge in Society" makes this point very well.³⁸ Hayek argues that no central government could ever possess complete knowledge of things like personal preferences and prices, which is essential for central planning. Economic problems always arrive with changing circumstances. So Hayek thought that these problem cannot be solved by central planner because too much to knowledge to give enough information to communicate how to change. Decisions should be left to individuals who are familiar with the changing circumstances. He believed that decentralization is best method, where individuals

³⁸ F. A. Hayek. "The Use of Knowledge in Society". The American Economic Review, Vol. 35, No. 4. (Sep., 1945). 519-530.

make their own decisions based on preference and their local knowledge. Some people, for example, might wish they could relinquish their claim to healthcare for extra education, or might trade in their food stamps for other goods. I think Hayek's writing gives good reason to think that the individual, rather than a centralized government, is best at determining what that individual might want or need.

I think the problems of socialism and the benefits of individual choice give a powerful reason to think that a UBI would be best at guaranteeing ECSO Freedom. Universally guaranteeing certain essential goods, as a socialist system would propose, is shown to be unsustainable. Thus, it could not universally guarantee ECSO Freedom. But, as we have seen from Hayek, individuals are the best at determining what goods the individual desires. A UBI gives everyone access to the marketplace of essential goods, but respects the constraints of the universal provision of essential goods. So, I believe we are best able to efficiently distribute goods and satisfy individual preferences with a UBI society.

VII. Conclusion

I think there is still work to be done to adequately support the idea of a UBI society. There are some questions that remain unanswered that were outside of the scope of my inquiry. I have maintained that the best way to distribute the external resources slush fund is in a way that is both universal and basic. But, I am not sure whether Widerquist and Parijs' UBI or Milton Friedman's NIT has more merit. I would wait for further studies to be done before deciding between the two. I believe that if there were sustainability problems brought on by changing behaviors towards employment, adapting a NIT over a UBI might be required.

The original problem that brought me to the study of the UBI was my internal conflict between liberalism and libertarianism. I respect a strong conception of what it means to be an autonomous individual in respect to the limits of government power and recognize a strong presumption of the preservation of private holding when questions of redistribution and taxation arise. Yet, this always conflicted with my humanitarian concerns for the poor and marginalized people in society, and my intuition that their situations were not entirely the result of their choices. In fact, because of their circumstances, I felt that they had far less life choices than those who grew up with easy access to resources. They are cut off from pursuing education and developing marketable skills and are forced to take jobs that they don't want because of the need to secure their own survival. I was eager to find a bridge that connected my respect for autonomy and personal freedom with the idea that these property less people should be given aid by the state.

In justifying the UBI society, I started from a very libertarian perspective on society. By starting with the work of Nozick, I worked from a heavy presumption of respecting private property and private transactions. (This presumption is also found in my defense of ECSO freedom, which is likewise founded on autonomy-respecting principles and intuitions). Even with these presumptions though, I have found that our system of distribution is not founded on just principles of transactions, holdings, and acquisitions, but rather that our system of distribution is the result of human disregard of these principles. This breaks down the absolutist sacredness of private property that many libertarians hold. There is in a sense no metaphysical purely private property (separate from a complete legal claim to that property) that people can claim. All land originated from this sort of common that everyone has a claim to a part of, and the fruits of labor - that often justify purely private holdings - could be produced only by using part of the common. The propertyless are being disenfranchised from this claim by those who have violated

principles of possession and are doomed to poverty because of it. Rather than harming autonomy and private activity, redistributing resources instead is required of any state that wishes to respect autonomy and ECSO freedom of all of its citizens. I believe with this line of reasoning, I have given a libertarian defense of the need for distribution and a libertarian solution to that problem, all while respecting autonomy and freedom.

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