

In Defense of a Democratic Productivist Welfare State

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Abstract: In this article, I defend a democratic form of the productivist welfare state. I argue that this form of the state can best cope, theoretically and practically, with the diversity of deeply morally pluralistic democratic societies for two reasons. First, the justification of this form of the state rests solely on general facts about human nature, basic human needs, and efficiency considerations in a world of moderately scarce resources. Second, this state does not aim to promote a specific view of justice, but human flourishing more generally, expressed in terms of individual and collective productivity. The proposed democratic productivist welfare state supports its citizens up to the level that allows them to develop and exercise their talents and abilities without providing incentives for free riding. I argue that, under the specific empirical circumstances that I describe, in particular certain informational restrictions concerning the precise productive and destructive capacities of the members of society in practice and the soundness of the Aristotelian principle, this goal may best be achieved in practice by the introduction of an unconditional basic income at subsistence level, if society is sufficiently developed economically to provide such an income. On productivist grounds, such an unconditional subsistence income also addresses, pragmatically and partially, the problem of historical injustices against the weakest members of society and provides all group members with the means for democratic participation.

1. Introduction

In democratic societies, legitimate state interference is tied conceptually to the question of justice because, ideally, democratic states institutionally enforce the demands of justice for the nonideal circumstances of the real world.¹ However, because the precise demands of justice are controversial in deeply morally pluralistic democratic societies in which not all members of society can be assumed to share the same conception of the good life and agree with the same moral ideals concerning questions of justice, such as libertarian, liberal, egalitarian, utilitarian, or prioritarian ideals, it seems that for deeply morally pluralistic societies no conclusive answer can be provided with regard to legitimate state interference. For deeply morally pluralistic societies, the ideal of a fully just society as judged from the perspectives of all members of society is unattainable and, especially for such societies, the topic of moral pluralism is significant because agents typically care deeply about the distribution of benefits and burdens in society,

both in absolute terms and comparatively, because such distribution typically determines the prospects of the agents' lives significantly.

In contemporary moral and political philosophy, however, the topic of moral pluralism is usually restricted to a 'reasonable' form of moral pluralism, which assumes that agents ultimately share broad agreement on certain core liberal moral ideals that they embrace. A case in point is Rawls' theory of justice. Although Rawls (2001: 33-4) believes that "...the diversity of religious, philosophical, and moral doctrines found in modern democratic societies is not a mere historical condition that may soon pass away..." but "...a permanent feature of the public culture of democracy," for his theory of justice, Rawls (1993: 51) assumes reasonable agents who possess a "...particular form of moral sensibility that underlies the desire to engage in fair cooperation as such, and to do so on terms that others as equals might reasonably be expected to endorse." Although Rawls stresses that his principles of justice can form the basis for an overlapping consensus on justice because the principles can be embraced from a wide range of comprehensive doctrines, Rawls assumes distinctively reasonable liberal moral agents as a basis for his theory of justice.

In this article, I broaden the scope of the discussion to address explicitly the situation of deeply morally pluralistic societies that may be populated by reasonable liberal moral agents, nonliberal moral agents, and, according to the traditional understanding of morality, nonmoral agents alike. In such deeply morally pluralistic societies, by definition, the precise demands of justice are controversial and no overlapping consensus on justice exists. Nevertheless, despite the assumption of deep moral pluralism, I reject the indeterminacy conclusion concerning legitimate state interference by defending a specific form of the productivist welfare state that I argue is defensible for such societies. To clarify, the productivist welfare state often is considered to be a particularly East Asian model of the welfare state that, if necessary, subordinates democratic values to economic success.² However, some European welfare states, such as Sweden, also are sometimes considered to be productivist welfare states that invest in "...optimizing people's capacity to be productive citizens" (Esping-Andersen 1994: 722),³ if the citizens wish to be productive. The core idea of the productivist welfare

state is to offer welfare provisions to its citizens not primarily out of concern for justice, but as a means to advance economic development.

In this article, I defend the notion of productivist welfare state capitalism for democratic societies that (i) prioritize economic development under the condition that basic political rights and equality of opportunity, which I consider to be core features of democratic societies, are ensured by the state, and (ii) adopt a pluralistic understanding of the notion of productivity that includes both social productivity and economic productivity, in particular because the former is often an essential basis for the latter. I argue that such a democratic form of the productivist welfare state can best cope, theoretically and practically, with the diversity of deeply morally pluralistic democratic societies for two reasons. First, the justification of this form of the state rests solely on general facts about human nature, basic human needs, and efficiency considerations in a world of moderately scarce resources. Second, this state does not aim to promote a specific view of justice, but human flourishing more generally, expressed in terms of individual and collective productivity. The proposed democratic productivist welfare state supports its citizens up to the level that allows them to develop and exercise their talents and abilities without providing incentives for free riding.

Further, I argue that, under the specific empirical circumstances that I describe, in particular certain informational restrictions concerning the precise productive and destructive capacities of the members of society in practice and the soundness of the Aristotelian principle,⁴ this goal may best be achieved in practice by the introduction of an unconditional basic income at subsistence level, if society is sufficiently developed economically to provide such an income. Such an unconditional subsistence income allows the members of society to satisfy their basic needs and develop and exercise their talents and abilities without assuming a too specific conception of the good life. I argue that, in addition to being sufficiently morally neutral and maximally efficient in its implementation and effective in its social impact, the unconditional subsistence income, under reasonable motivational assumptions expressed by the Aristotelian principle, provides, from a productivist perspective, an effective solution to the problem of free riding. Moreover, on productivist grounds, the unconditional subsistence income also

addresses, pragmatically and partially, the problem of historical injustices against the weakest members of society and provides all group members with the means for democratic participation.

My argument is restricted in the following ways. First, although I do not defend a substantial concept of justice, which would be controversial in deeply morally pluralistic societies, my argument focuses on questions that, traditionally conceived, fall into the domain of distributive justice. More specifically, my argument focuses on the distribution of income and wealth, and not on the topic of political justice. The topic of distributive justice, as traditionally conceived, is related to the topic of political justice, because political rights generally affect the income opportunities of the members of society, especially if the rights formally provide, directly or indirectly, access to jobs that serve as major sources of income and wealth, such as the rights to freedom of occupation and equality of opportunity. Nevertheless, formal rights alone are ineffectual if agents do not possess the means that are necessary to exercise these rights.⁵

My argument does not directly address, and mostly abstracts from, the interdependency between questions of distributive justice and political justice, although, as indicated, I assume as a basis for my argument that modern democratic societies grant to their citizens basic political rights and enforce equality of opportunity. My argument focuses primarily on questions that are traditionally conceived to be questions of distributive justice, because such questions are most pressing at times when the welfare state has come under scrutiny due to its comparatively high tax burden that may pose a threat to the competitiveness of society in a globally interdependent world. In addition, if fully implemented, the level of welfare provided by the proposed democratic productivist welfare state, especially by the unconditional subsistence income, is assumed to provide all members of society with sufficient means to exercise the basic political rights that are commonly granted to them by modern democratic societies.

Second, although the proposed democratic productivist welfare state defends a theoretically coherent and practically feasible institutional framework for economically advanced democratic societies that are deeply morally pluralistic with regard to distributive questions, my argument does not address the political feasibility of the

proposed democratic productivist welfare state, which depends on the specific circumstances of particular societies, such as their culture, history, and existing social and political institutions.⁶ For the same reason, my argument does not determine the precise design of social institutions for the democratic productivist welfare state, or the best way to finance the unconditional subsistence income, such as by a natural resource dividend,⁷ or taxes on income, wealth, consumption, financial transactions (Tobin tax), and inheritance, because such details depend on the specific institutional structures of particular societies. The proposed democratic productivist welfare state determines merely the legitimate institutional space for economically advanced democratic societies that are deeply morally pluralistic with regard to distributive questions.

Third, my argument does not explicitly address the situation of members of society who may need more assistance than is provided by the unconditional subsistence income in order to be able to participate in social and economic cooperation. Such members of society may include some disabled persons and parents, depending on their particular situations.⁸ For such agents and their dependents, it may well be rational for the state to offer on productivist grounds more support than is provided by the unconditional subsistence income in order to ensure the agents' current and future ability to participate in cooperation, if such support is beneficial for all members of society. Such specific considerations, however, which apply only to a subset of the members of society, fall outside the scope of my argument, as do arguments in support of such agents based on substantial views of justice that may be controversial in deeply morally pluralistic democratic societies.

2. Deep Moral Pluralism and Distributive Justice

Let us assume a modern democratic society in which all members of society, despite their divergent moral ideals concerning questions of distributive justice, agree on certain basic political rights and equality of opportunity. For the purpose of my argument, it is not necessary to specify the precise political rights and form of equality of opportunity to be instituted by the state because, although these concepts are part and parcel of

modern democratic states, their precise nature often differs from state to state. However, with regard to the notion of equality of opportunity, I assume the formal notion of the concept that demands that (i) jobs and offices are open to all applicants, (ii) all applications are assessed by relevant criteria of merit, and (iii) the most highly-ranked candidate is offered the job. I do not defend Rawls' substantive notion of 'fair' equality of opportunity that is not only theoretically controversial but also, to my knowledge, not implemented by any currently existing democratic society.⁹

Despite deep moral pluralism concerning questions of distributive justice, the members of society are rational and, in distributive conflicts, are assumed to aim to fulfill their interests maximally based on their actual capacities in the world in which they live in order to model the most severe type of distributive conflict that may arise among agents. In addition, the members of society understand that, due to extensive division of labor and knowledge in modern democratic societies and moderately scarce resources, they can maximally fulfill their interests, especially their material interests, only in cooperation with others. As such, and as a result of their shared human nature, basic human needs, and general empirical conditions of this world, the members of society consider it advantageous to cooperate peacefully with one another, because peaceful long-term cooperation allows the realization of additional gains from cooperation and avoids the destruction of scarce resources through ongoing conflict. Peaceful long-term cooperation advances social development and economic growth and is likely to help maximize agents' long-term gains from cooperation,¹⁰ and, in this sense, represents a common (productivist) goal for all rational members of democratic societies that are deeply morally pluralistic with regard to distributive questions.

Under the circumstances described, rational agents have a *prima facie* interest in finding agreement on a principle for resolving distributive conflicts and on a corresponding form of the state that, in practice, institutionalizes the demands of this principle in order to ensure mutually beneficial peaceful long-term cooperation compared to violent conflict resolution. In previous work, I argue that, for the circumstances described, if rational agents decide on a principle of conflict resolution in

an idealized but empirically defensible hypothetical decision situation, then they would agree with the ‘weak principle of universalization’:

In cases of conflict, only pursue your interests subject to the side constraints that your opponents can (i) enter the process of conflict resolution at least from their minimum standards of living, if the goods that are in dispute permit it, and (ii) fulfill their interests above this level according to their relative bargaining power. (Moehler 2012: 100)¹¹

Applied to distributive questions, the weak principle of universalization defines the minimal behavioral demands that, from the perspectives of rational agents, must be fulfilled in distributive conflicts in order to ensure mutually beneficial peaceful long-term cooperation in deeply morally pluralistic societies compared to violent conflict resolution. Because the weak principle of universalization is assumed to guide the arrangement of the basic institutions of society with regard to distributive questions, the demands of the principle must be transferred from the individual level to the institutional level.¹² I address the two demands of the weak principle of universalization in reverse order.

The second demand of the weak principle of universalization requires that all members of society must be allowed to defend their interests in distributive conflicts according to their relative bargaining power, restricted only by the constraint of ensuring mutually beneficial peaceful long-term cooperation compared to violent conflict resolution. This demand seems to be best fulfilled by the institution of a free market system that, if perfectly competitive, allocates resources efficiently by realizing all possible gains of cooperation and, in doing so, allows mobilization of significant benefits from large-scale human cooperation, which individually would not be attainable.¹³ In addition, as demanded by the weak principle of universalization, a market system distributes the gains of cooperation roughly in proportion to the market participants’ bargaining power, as expressed by their relative contribution to the production process in terms of labor, skill, and other relevant factors of production. To clarify, perfectly competitive markets, strictly speaking, do not allow agents to have bargaining power because all market participants are assumed to be price takers. Precisely then, however, all agents, or more specifically, the factors of production that they hold, receive in theory a share of the gains of cooperation that corresponds to their

relative contribution to the production process, as measured by relative market prices, without value judgments that are not part of the market process.

In practice, however, markets are almost never perfectly competitive, and thus do not necessarily lead to the most efficient outcomes and do not necessarily compensate agents according to their relative contributions to the production process. In practice, imperfect and asymmetric information among market participants lead to distortions that provide some agents with market power. Under such imperfect conditions, markets allow rent seeking, in which case those who receive the highest rewards are not necessarily those who have made the highest contributions, with the size of the expected gains and losses being broadly a function of the asymmetries in the market power among the market participants. Furthermore, in practice, outcomes are usually uncertain and determined partly by luck. Speculative bubbles may arise and burst, which may cause the invisible hand to falter to the disadvantage of some or all members of society.

In order to guarantee that, in practice, markets fulfill the second condition of the weak principle of universalization, an institutional framework must be established that aims to ensure that the outcomes of real markets approximate the outcomes of perfectly competitive markets as closely as possible. In particular, through adequate mechanism design, the institutional framework must ensure that (i) monopolies and other forms of market power are restricted, (ii) essential public goods are provided sufficiently, (iii) common goods are not overused, and (iv) contracts among market participants are enforced.¹⁴ To this end, private property rights, although not absolute, must be well defined and protected by effective judicial and police systems. If such institutional structures are in place, then free markets seem to represent, for a variety of human conditions, the most productive organization of human cooperation that fulfills the second demand of the weak principle of universalization.¹⁵

However, free markets, together with the enforcement of basic political rights and equality of opportunity by the state, do not necessarily fulfill the first demand of the weak principle of universalization, which requires that all members of society are granted at least the means that they need to maintain their minimum standards of living and, in this sense, maintain their existence as separate agents and satisfy their basic

human needs, as a basis for conflict resolution, if the agents follow the established rules of society and their society is sufficiently economically developed. If, under these conditions, the members of society are not granted at least the means for survival as a basis for conflict resolution, then peaceful long-term cooperation is not necessarily possible or desirable for the agents. As a consequence, if the members of society cannot simply be excluded from the cooperative framework (which I assume they cannot), then it may be rational for them to try to disturb the stability of the cooperative framework through negative actions, such as social unrest, civil war, and the like, as well as by threatening the lives of others, assuming that the agents are roughly equal by nature in that the weakest is able to kill the strongest.¹⁶ Such negative actions are likely to slow social development and economic growth, or they may render cooperation unbeneficial by creating high costs associated with deterring such negative actions, especially costs that stem from police enforcement, a functioning judicial system, and imprisonment.

To clarify, granting agents the means that they need to maintain their minimum standards of living merely as an outcome of distributional conflicts is not sufficient for *all* rational agents to take a sustained interest in peaceful long-term cooperation. From the perspectives of rational agents, aside from not having to fear losing their lives, the advantage of peaceful long-term cooperation is primarily the additional gains that peaceful long-term cooperation makes possible compared to violent conflict resolution. As such, rational agents will generally agree with a principle for resolving distributive conflicts only if they can hope to benefit from these additional gains, which is one of the primary reasons for the agents to establish a social framework that ensures peaceful long-term cooperation. This condition is not necessarily fulfilled if the distributive principle allows the agents merely to reach their minimum standards of living as an outcome of the process of conflict resolution.

Assume, for example, agents who live currently at their subsistence level and who are, in comparison to others, so weak that they cannot expect to improve their situations over time by participating constructively in the market system of their society, even if they work to the maximum of their abilities, apart from the consideration that the agents' minimum standards of living may slightly increase over time if society

becomes wealthier (although even in this case the agents would only receive what is considered by their society to be the bare minimum for survival). These agents will not have access to the additional gains of peaceful long-term cooperation if the distributive principle allows the agents to reach their minimum standards of living merely as a result of their productive efforts. In more general terms, if, as a result of their abilities, the agents' capacity to cooperate is limited solely to acquiring the means that they need to survive, and a distributive principle ensures this subsistence level merely as a result of the agents' endeavors, then the agents would be excluded from the additional gains that peaceful long-term cooperation makes possible compared to violent conflict resolution. For rational agents to agree with a principle for resolving distributive conflicts, the principal intent of which is to generate additional gains of cooperation by ensuring peaceful long-term cooperation, the agents must be assured that they can generally benefit from these gains. To this end, the principle must allow the agents to enter the process of conflict resolution at least from their minimum standards of living, if society is sufficiently economically developed, because otherwise, in the worst case, some agents may be cut off entirely from the primary gains of peaceful long-term cooperation.

In other words, in order for rational agents, including the weakest members of society, to have an interest in establishing *and* maintaining a social framework that ensures peaceful long-term cooperation (which is a basic assumption of my argument), the agents must be able, if society can afford it economically, to maintain their lives in society independently of the market's relative assessment of their specific talents and abilities, so that the agents have a chance, independent of their specific talents and abilities, to improve their situations beyond mere subsistence.¹⁷ In order to *ensure* that this condition *always* is fulfilled for *all* members of economically advanced democratic societies (and not just for the strong members of society), society must provide, reliably and permanently, to all members of society the means that they need to survive. That is, society must provide the necessary means for survival independently of the group members' historically accidental starting points and their capacity to support themselves on the basis of their talents and abilities through social cooperation, because this

capacity may change over a lifetime and depends significantly on the social and economic structure of society.

The demand of the weak principle of universalization that society must, reliably and permanently, provide all members of society with the means that they need to survive, if society is sufficiently developed economically to generally provide such means, can be satisfied in different ways, such as by traditional welfare schemes, depending on the precise social and economic circumstances of society. In the following, I argue that, under specific empirical circumstances, in particular certain informational restrictions concerning the precise productive and destructive capacities of the members of society in practice and the soundness of the Aristotelian principle, this demand may best be fulfilled in practice by the institution of an unconditional basic income at subsistence level as the sole welfare scheme.

3. An Unconditional Subsistence Income

In philosophical literature, the concept of an ‘unconditional basic income’, although not necessarily at the subsistence level, has been defended most prominently by Van Parijs.¹⁸ The unconditional basic income is a cash benefit that is granted to each permanent adult member of society and paid by the state regularly (for example, each month) and directly to the beneficiary in an unconditional manner, that is, without a work- or means-test. However, because the primary goal of the democratic productivist welfare state is to ensure peaceful long-term cooperation, which demands that rational agents expect peaceful long-term cooperation to be more beneficial to them than violent conflict resolution, the following general productivist restrictions that help to ensure the long-term productivity of society apply to the payment of the subsistence income in the context of the democratic productivist welfare state.

First, the state is assumed to pay the subsistence income only to permanent members of society who comply with the rules of their society and fulfill their civic duties. If agents violate these rules or engage in destructive actions that endanger peaceful long-term cooperation and they are convicted of such violations and imprisoned, then they

forfeit their right to receive the subsistence income. One of the main reasons for introducing the subsistence income as part of the democratic productivist welfare state is precisely to reduce the number of crimes, especially crimes related to securing basic means for survival. Second, although the members of society can spend their unconditional subsistence income as they wish, they must buy certain basic protections, such as adequate health insurance, as determined by their society, in order to ensure, above the subsistence level, their own wellbeing and the wellbeing of others without imposing a significant burden on society.

Third, all members of society who are generally able to do so¹⁹ are assumed to fulfill the basic educational requirements of their society that, ideally, will allow them to develop their talents and abilities from a young age and prepare them for participation in the labor market of their society as well as for socially and culturally useful work. Fourth, and relatedly, the proposed democratic productivist welfare state is assumed to offer guidance to its members by providing information about educational and professional opportunities, financial planning, and healthy lifestyles so that all members of society are in a position to spend their subsistence income responsibly. Such guidance may be especially advantageous for some of the weakest members of society who may be born into less fortunate circumstances than other group members, although ultimately the members of society themselves decide the extent to which they consider such information for their life choices.

These four general productivist restrictions regarding the payment of the subsistence income aim to ensure that the policy fulfills its purpose to enable all citizens to be productive members of society, if they wish to be productive, and to have the chance to benefit from the additional gains from peaceful long-term cooperation compared to violent conflict resolution. Even with these general productivist restrictions, the unconditional subsistence income, as a social welfare scheme, is sufficiently morally neutral for democratic societies that are deeply morally pluralistic with regard to distributive questions, because, in contrast to traditional welfare schemes, the unconditional subsistence income does not defend a particular comprehensive view of the good life. Instead, it provides agents with the means to fulfill, at least minimally,

their own conceptions of the good life and encourages them to develop their talents and abilities for their own benefit and, ultimately, the benefit of society.

The level of the subsistence income is assumed to be determined based upon facts about human nature and social cooperation that apply to all members of society as a result of their existence in this empirical world, and not upon potentially controversial moral views. That is, not only the justification of the unconditional subsistence income, but also the determination of its level are assumed to be based on morally uncontroversial grounds. In order to ensure peaceful long-term cooperation, the main criterion for determining agents' minimum standards of living is that agents regard the amount of goods provided to be sufficient for living a minimally decent life, as defined by the agents' ability to maintain their existence as separate agents and satisfy their basic human needs.²⁰ Because the basic needs of agents may vary slightly interpersonally, it may be best to err on the positive side as to the level of the unconditional subsistence income in order to avoid the destruction of human capital.

In addition to being sufficiently morally neutral for the conditions of democratic societies that are deeply morally pluralistic with regard to distributive questions, the unconditional basic income is maximally efficient in its implementation and, as Goodin points out,²¹ effective in reaching its goals compared to traditional welfare schemes, because the unconditional basic income is minimally presumptuous concerning justice. Traditional welfare schemes, for example, must specify, according to some consensus on justice, who deserves support by the state and to what extent agents deserve such support. To this end, criteria must be determined based upon current social facts that can help discriminate between the deserving and undeserving poor. Also, the needs of different agents must be weighed against each other. Finally, in order to institute traditional welfare schemes, a social policy plan must be developed, laws must be passed, and actual social policies must be implemented.

The problem with this process is that, apart from the costly bureaucratic apparatus that it requires, the social facts upon which social policies are based often change, and significant time lags may occur between the design of social policies and their actual implementation. As a result, if the social facts change before the policies are

implemented, then the welfare scheme will inevitably create injustices. In a similar vein, Gaus argues that policymakers have no reason to believe that their policies will reach their goals, even when they know what they want to achieve through traditional welfare schemes, because of the various forms of uncertainty involved in policymaking that stem primarily from (i) the complexity of public policy goals, (ii) conflicting hypotheses regarding relevant causes, and (iii) the limited ability to predict the consequences of particular policies and their implementation.²²

In this sense, traditional welfare schemes are ineffective in promoting justice, independent of their underlying view of justice, and they are costly in their implementation and administration. By contrast, the unconditional subsistence income does not aim to promote a specific view of justice. Instead, its goal is simply to allow all members of society to maintain their existence as separate agents and satisfy their basic human needs independently of the market's assessment of their specific talents and abilities so that the agents can benefit from cooperation above their minimum standards of living. This feature of the unconditional subsistence income is especially important in practice where it is often impossible to judge exactly when agents fall below their minimum standards of living, or come close to doing so, and when, as a result, they would be willing to engage in destructive actions. As demanded by the weak principle of universalization, the unconditional subsistence income ensures that, despite such informational restrictions in practice, all members of society have the means to survive and to benefit from the additional gains of peaceful long-term cooperation, and thus have the possibility to improve their positions beyond mere subsistence. Further, because the unconditional subsistence income is paid by the state to all members of society by, for example, an automatic monthly direct deposit into each citizen's bank account, the bureaucratic apparatus needed to administer the policy is minimal compared to traditional welfare schemes and does not require to discriminate between the deserving and undeserving poor. In this sense, the unconditional subsistence income is maximally efficient in its implementation and effective in its social impact.

4. The Aristotelian Principle and Productivity

One concern related to the introduction of the unconditional subsistence income in the context of the proposed democratic productivist welfare state is the policy's potentially negative effect on the work ethic of agents. The concern is that some or many members of society may not engage, or engage less, in paid work if they unconditionally receive a subsistence income, which may render the policy an economic liability to society instead of ensuring the productivity of society and additional gains from peaceful long-term cooperation. Whether or not the unconditional subsistence income would become an economic liability to society depends significantly on human beings' motivation to work. In the following, I argue that, if human beings are guided generally by what Rawls calls the 'Aristotelian principle', or by an approximation of this principle, and if the notion of productivity is understood in a pluralistic sense that includes both social and economic productivity, then the unconditional subsistence income represents a viable productivist policy for economically advanced democratic societies that are deeply morally pluralistic with regard to distributive questions.

According to the Aristotelian principle, human beings "...enjoy the exercise of their realized capacities (their innate or trained abilities), and this enjoyment increases the more the capacity is realized, or the greater its complexity" (Rawls 1971: 374). That is, if they are free to do so, human beings have a tendency to exercise and develop their innate and trained talents and abilities, and the more they do so and the more complex the tasks they can perform, the greater is the intrinsic satisfaction that they receive from their activities. According to Rawls (1971: 375-76), the Aristotelian principle states a deep psychological fact about human nature. It is a descriptive principle about human motivation that expresses

...a psychological law governing changes in the pattern of our desires. Thus the principle implies that as a person's capacities increase over time (brought about by physiological and biological maturation, for example, the development of the nervous system in a young child), and as he trains these capacities and learns how to exercise them, he will in due course come to prefer the more complex activities that he can now engage in which call upon his newly realized abilities. The simpler things he enjoyed before are no longer sufficiently interesting or attractive. If we ask why we are willing to undergo the stresses of practice and learning, the reason may be (if we leave out of account external rewards and penalties) that having had some success at learning things

in the past, and experiencing the present enjoyments of the activity, we are led to expect even greater satisfaction once we acquire a greater repertoire of skills.

If the Aristotelian principle holds as a descriptively sound principle of human motivation, then *de facto* human beings will generally not feel satisfied with living idle lives (although some of them may be tempted to do so for certain periods of their lives),²³ if they receive the unconditional subsistence income. Instead, human beings will generally be motivated to engage in activities that help them realize and develop their talents and abilities, such as being a carpenter, nurse, teacher, lawyer, physician, or artist.²⁴ Human beings feel responsible for their lives, and receiving the unconditional subsistence income generally would not make them give up this responsibility and squander their lives,²⁵ although some agents may reduce their paid work time. However, in addition to the intrinsic satisfaction that meaningful paid work provides,²⁶ most human beings also value the monetary rewards of paid work and the social status attached to gainful employment, and they will engage in paid work in order to receive such benefits that allow them to raise their standards of living over time.

Further, empirical studies show that, although human beings generally do not experience high levels of happiness without having satisfied their basic material needs and without some security of being able to do so,²⁷ once these basic needs are met, as would be ensured by the unconditional subsistence income, material factors become less important for human happiness than nonmaterial factors, such as self-esteem and a sense of personal and intellectual development, which agents are more likely to receive from meaningful paid work.²⁸ Basic psychological needs, such as a positive sense of self and personal competence, very often are tied to meaningful paid work, and because the unconditional subsistence income increases agents' ability to adopt such work, it is likely to increase their willingness to work and, *ceteris paribus*, their productivity. As Lane (1991: 235) puts it, “[i]t is in work, not in consumption and, as research reports show, not even in leisure, where most people engage in activities that they find most satisfying.”

In other words, the introduction of the unconditional subsistence income generally would not abolish ambition and diminish agents' willingness to engage in paid work.

Instead, it may even foster such inclinations, especially for the weakest members of society who, free from subsistence-related pressure (as are usually most other gainfully employed members of society), may decide to seek further education and job training to qualify for jobs that are more satisfying to them because the jobs match their talents and abilities more closely and allow them to be more productive than they would be without the unconditional subsistence income. The unconditional subsistence income would allow agents to have discretion in choosing or refusing jobs that they currently consider to be degrading for their pay (such jobs would have to provide more compensation or better work conditions, or both, than they currently do in order to be attractive).²⁹ Further, the unconditional subsistence income would allow agents to accept meaningful jobs that may be essential for the economy and provide agents with autonomy, status, opportunity for creativity, pride, and other valuable nonmaterial goods, but that do not necessarily pay for subsistence.

De facto, the unconditional subsistence income makes all paid work in society voluntary in that no member of society must work merely in order to secure the means for survival, which maximizes agents' occupational freedom and, *ceteris paribus*, their motivation to work. This consideration is especially relevant in societies in which human capital, from an economic perspective, is a highly valuable resource, as is the case for most modern economically advanced democratic societies. In addition, the introduction of the unconditional subsistence income is likely to have a positive effect on the productivity of society as a whole, because it is likely to increase the quality of the work pool through higher levels of competition and entrepreneurship by providing agents with the security that, if their businesses fail, they will have the means to survive.

In other words, the introduction of the unconditional subsistence income would make the labor market more flexible and thereby potentially reduce unemployment, especially long-term unemployment caused by structural changes, which is a core problem for most modern economically advanced democratic societies.³⁰ Under these conditions, the unconditional subsistence income is likely to have a positive effect, or at least no significant negative effect, on the *economic productivity* of modern economically advanced democratic societies, and thus is likely to increase economic long-term

growth. Under these conditions, the income floor that the unconditional subsistence income would provide to all members of society does not represent an income ceiling. Instead, the unconditional subsistence income would encourage economic activity beyond the subsistence level and, over time, may render paid work even more desirable, because the policy helps create employment opportunities that are intrinsically desirable for agents.

In addition, the introduction of the unconditional subsistence income would encourage agents not only to take up paid work but also unpaid and often underpaid social, cultural, and creative work,³¹ such as domestic work, caregiving, and volunteer work as well as artistic and other creative contributions to society and, in this sense, would increase the *social productivity* of society, even if not all members of society value such work. Traditional gross national product calculations generally do not (adequately) consider unpaid work that, despite its general neglect in traditional national accounting systems, is often essential for the functioning and development of society.³² The unconditional subsistence income would allow agents to engage more freely in such unpaid or underpaid social, cultural, and creative work and, in doing so, would help to ensure the economic productivity of society.

To clarify this point, the introduction of the unconditional subsistence income may lead to a certain substitution effect between economic activities and social, cultural, and creative activities, because the policy would allow agents to engage more freely in such often partially noneconomic activities that do not necessarily pay for subsistence. However, under the assumption of the Aristotelian principle, such substitution is not necessarily detrimental to the economic productivity of society because, apart from the fact that many economically advanced democratic societies do not have enough paid jobs for their workforce,³³ the economic productivity of society depends significantly on its social productivity, even if the latter is often not precisely measurable and quantifiable. As such, the substitution effect, if not too significant, would strengthen the social fabric of society and bolster the basis for economic productivity. As Banks et al. (2013: 3) write with regard to cultural and creative activities:

[A]rtists and ‘creatives’ more broadly are said to embody the new form of constantly labouring subjectivity required for contemporary capitalism, in which the requirements for people fully to embrace risk, entrepreneurialism and to adopt a ‘sacrificial ethos’ are often linked to an artistic or creative vocation.

As such, under the circumstances described, the introduction of the unconditional subsistence income would serve as an effective productivist policy in the context of the proposed democratic productivist welfare state, if productivity is understood in terms of both social productivity and economic productivity. The unconditional subsistence income would create new social and economic employment opportunities and institutionalize a new work culture that does not instrumentalize agents’ need for subsistence and thereby would minimize agents’ reasons for counterproductive measures.³⁴ As Segall (2005: 344) puts it:

One could as easily imagine that the message sent through the introduction of UBI [universal basic income] would be a public recognition of the individual citizen as a stakeholder in society, thereby heightening the sense of duty to work. Certainly, as far as current welfare systems are concerned, it is the case that the Scandinavian, relatively unconditional regime produces not only higher levels of actual participation in the labour force, but also a stronger commitment on the part of the citizen to work.

5. Free Riders and Historical Injustices

Nevertheless, some members of society may decide to reduce their economic contributions to society significantly without engaging in socially valuable activities if they were to receive an unconditional subsistence income. Such agents would receive more than they contribute to society and, in the worst case, would receive something for nothing, which, according to some, violates the principle of reciprocity.³⁵

However, this so-called ‘free rider’ (or ‘slacker’) problem arises also for traditional welfare schemes.³⁶ In fact, traditional welfare schemes, such as unemployment schemes, may provide even stronger incentives for agents not to engage in paid work, because such schemes often demand that agents do not take up paid work, or work only marginally, while they receive benefits from the state. Such agents are not necessarily free riders, because they typically receive state benefits only if they have paid into the social insurance system for a certain period of time. Nevertheless, as a result of the institutional structures of traditional welfare schemes, agents may find themselves in a

poverty trap that discourages them to take up significant paid work. In fact, traditional welfare schemes may even provide agents with the incentive to fulfill the requirements for receiving welfare provisions by the state, as in the case of so-called ‘welfare mothers’.³⁷

In addition to these theoretical considerations, in practice it is impossible to ensure that only those who deserve benefits from the state receive such benefits. As such, on pragmatic grounds it may be most cost-effective to pay all members of society the unconditional subsistence income. As Howard (2005: 127) puts it:

Assuming that most people want to contribute to society, is it not better to endure a few real slackers in order to liberate the rest to contribute creatively and without surveillance than to try to catch the slackers, burden bureaucrats with arbitrary judgments, and exclude genuine and needy contributors?

If the unconditional subsistence income becomes an institutional reality and agents are freed from working primarily for their survival, then it is also more likely that the agents will develop a desire to contribute socially and economically to society, which may be especially true for the weakest members of society. Although after the initial introduction of the unconditional subsistence income some of the weakest members of society may be tempted to free ride because, for the first time in their lives, they do not have to fear for their material existence, over time they may contribute their social and economic share, if society ‘takes care’ of them and they have a chance to climb the social ladder, which is one of the core aims of the democratic productivist welfare state.

In addition, as Rawls (1971: 376) points out, the Aristotelian principle may give rise to a so-called ‘companion effect’ that,³⁸ apart from external social pressure, intrinsically motivates agents to work, if they live in a functioning society in which preference for work, not leisure, is the prime standard:

As we witness the exercise of well-trained abilities by others, these displays are enjoyed by us and arouse a desire that we should be able to do the same things ourselves. We want to be like those persons who can exercise the abilities that we find latent in our nature.

This line of reasoning shows that, if a dynamic analysis is assumed, the free-rider problem does not necessarily pose a threat to the introduction of the unconditional subsistence income under the assumption of the Aristotelian principle. Instead, over

time the unconditional subsistence income is likely to mobilize human capital that otherwise would remain underused or unused or even be a burden to society. In this sense, the unconditional subsistence income, as part of the productivist welfare state, could become a powerful tool to shape the future social and economic success of society in a sustainable manner.³⁹

Or, to put this point differently, in order to ensure that, for economically advanced democratic societies that are deeply morally pluralistic with regard to distributive questions, the introduction of the unconditional subsistence income represents a viable productivist policy that minimizes destructive actions, administrative costs, and the costs associated with free riding, the state should design social institutions that foster agents' inclination to develop their talents and abilities and exercise their capacities in socially and economically productive ways, even if the agents ultimately decide their level of productive engagement in society. For productivist reasons, the state should create a positive attitude towards educational opportunities and work in order to ensure that the Aristotelian principle is *de facto* a descriptively accurate principle of human motivation.

This, implicitly, is the goal of the democratic productivist welfare state that provides agents from an early age with educational opportunities and offers the unconditional subsistence income only to agents who fulfill (assuming that they are generally able to do so) the basic educational requirements of their society that prepare them for the labor market and socially and culturally useful work. Such institutional structures, together with (i) the occupational freedom provided by the subsistence income, (ii) a social environment that considers work, not leisure, as the prime standard, (iii) the companion effect, and (iv) the monetary and social rewards that work provides, would enable and motivate agents to be socially and economically productive, although ultimately the agents would decide the extent to which they engage in productive activities.

To be clear about this point, the encouragement concerning social and economic productivity does not make the productivist welfare state defended here 'perfectionist' in that the state holds that, if agents do not exercise (maximally) their talents and abilities, then their lives will not be fulfilled.⁴⁰ The productivist welfare state defended

here does not impose an objective conception of the human good on agents that assumes that exercising one's talents and abilities is good *per se* independent of one's enjoyment of such activities. Instead, the productivist welfare state is neutral with regard to the question of the human good. It assumes merely that, in a world of moderately scarce resources in which agents' interests cannot generally all be satisfied fully, it is generally advantageous to design social institutions that advance productivity rather than prevent it, because in the worst case agents do want to fulfill their interests maximally in distributive conflicts, and the productivist welfare state is designed to address this case. That is, the reasons offered for the justification of the institutional structures of the productivist welfare state are purely instrumental and not perfectionist, although the structures themselves encourage social and economic productivity.

Further, the productivist welfare state does not assume that all members of society desire more goods over less goods or value social and economic productivity *per se*, although the members of society are generally assumed to value the possibility to cooperate with others and benefit from the additional gains that peaceful long-term cooperation makes possible. If some members of society do not want to engage in productive activities and do not aim to maximize their gains from cooperation in distributive conflicts, then they are free to do so. In this case, however, we do not face the most severe type of distributive conflict that may arise in deeply morally pluralistic societies in which both parties to a conflict demand as much as possible. In other words, the productivist welfare state provides merely an institutional framework that enables all members of society to be socially and economically productive, if they wish to do so. Ultimately, the members of society decide the extent to which they engage in productive activity and, more generally, what constitutes a good life for them, because the unconditional subsistence income is paid without a work- or means-test.

This feature of the productivist welfare state to enable agents to be socially and economically productive is especially relevant for the weakest members of society who, without the unconditional subsistence income, may be unable to be(come) productive members of society due to their unfortunate starting positions that often stem from historical injustices.⁴¹ To clarify, some members of society may be worse off today than

they would have been if they or their ancestors had not suffered, according to some view of justice, from past wrongdoings (either by individuals or social institutions), especially in the acquisition or exchange of private property rights, that have not been corrected. More generally, because of the lack of historical information, the current distribution of private property rights can never be fully justified in existing societies. In this sense, historical injustices remain largely unaddressed and often will be perpetuated.

In the following, I do not argue that such injustices must be rectified in the name of justice, because in deeply morally pluralistic societies no agreement on questions of justice can be assumed. Nevertheless, as a result of historical injustices, some members of society, especially the weakest members of society, may be unable to participate productively in social and economic cooperation today, even if they wish to do so, which reduces not only their individual productivity but may also negatively affect the productivity of society and, in this sense, negatively affect all members of society.⁴²

The introduction of the unconditional subsistence income could be viewed as a pragmatic and partial response to historical injustices against the weakest members of society to the extent that such injustices negatively affect individual and collective productivity, in particular because the weakest members of society may be the most severely affected by historical injustices. As Nozick (1974: 231) puts it, "...victims of injustice generally do worse than they otherwise would..." and "...those from the least well-off group in the society have the highest probabilities of being the (descendants of) victims of the most serious injustice...."⁴³ The introduction of the unconditional subsistence income would ensure that those individuals receive a minimum amount of resources that allows them to develop their talents and abilities and become productive members of society independently of their historically accidental starting points, assuming basic political rights and equality of opportunity.

To avoid misunderstanding, the unconditional subsistence income does not necessarily compensate adequately for past wrongdoings according to any particular view of justice. In fact, it may over- or under-compensate agents, or it may compensate some agents undeservedly according to particular views of justice. As indicated, my

argument for the unconditional subsistence income in the context of historical injustices is not driven by considerations of rectificatory justice (although it may be supported by some members of society on such grounds), because no agreement on such moral questions can be assumed in deeply morally pluralistic democratic societies. Instead, my argument is driven by productivist considerations. The introduction of the unconditional subsistence income would help agents, especially the weakest members of society, to participate constructively in society, if they wish to do so, independently of their historical starting points, and thus despite possible historical injustices.

In addition to these considerations, the unconditional subsistence income would allow all members of society, especially the weakest members of society, to participate in democratic decision making and public life more generally, if they wish to do so, because all members of society would receive the means that they need to survive, and thus they could afford the time to engage in public decision making. In this sense, the unconditional subsistence income would strengthen democracy. Overall, under the circumstances described, the unconditional subsistence income can be seen as an investment in the weakest members of society that is likely to increase not only individual and collective long-term productivity, but also democratic participation, which is generally a core goal and essential basis for democratic societies to function well. In this sense, my defense of the unconditional subsistence income in the context of the proposed democratic productivist welfare state differs significantly from most other defenses of the basic income found in philosophical literature.⁴⁴

6. Concluding Remarks

In this article, I have defended a democratic form of the productivist welfare state on grounds that are assumed to be acceptable to all rational agents in economically advanced democratic societies that are deeply morally pluralistic with regard to distributive questions. I have argued that the members of such societies would agree with the weak principle of universalization as a principle for resolving distributive conflicts, assuming that basic political rights and equality of opportunity are ensured. I

have argued that, although not necessarily uniquely, the demands of the weak principle of universalization may best be institutionalized by a free market system that is embedded into an institutional framework that aims to ensure that (i) the outcomes of real markets approximate the outcomes of perfectly competitive markets, (ii) essential public goods are provided sufficiently, and (iii) essential common goods are not overused. In addition, under the specific empirical circumstances described, in particular certain informational restrictions concerning the precise productive and destructive capacities of the members of society in practice and the soundness of the Aristotelian principle, all members of society should be granted, if society is sufficiently economically developed, an unconditional subsistence income that provides them with the basic means to maintain their lives independently of the market's assessment of their specific talents and abilities, and the means for democratic participation.

Under the assumption of the Aristotelian principle and the general productivist restrictions attached to the subsistence income in the context of the productivist welfare state, the unconditional subsistence income represents a viable productivist policy that is likely to advance the overall productivity of economically advanced democratic societies. Under the conditions described, the unconditional subsistence income would enable all citizens, especially the weakest members of society, to participate productively in social and economic cooperation and to benefit from the additional gains of peaceful long-term cooperation, as well as to participate in democracy, without creating a significant free-rider problem and without imposing high administrative costs.⁴⁵ Or, *vice versa*, in order for the unconditional subsistence income to represent a viable productivist policy in the context of the democratic productivist welfare state, the general assumptions made, especially the Aristotelian principle, must hold. I have presented a conditional argument for the unconditional subsistence income that specifies the conditions under which the unconditional subsistence income is likely to represent a viable productivist policy. I have not argued that the Aristotelian principle holds, or holds universally, as an assumption about human motivation to work.

The proposed democratic productivist welfare state does not defend a specific view of justice and is not based on an overlapping consensus on justice à la Rawls. By

definition, reaching such a consensus is impossible in democratic societies that are deeply morally pluralistic with regard to distributive questions, because in such societies no shared moral basis exists that could form the basis for such a consensus. As a consequence, the members of deeply morally pluralistic societies do not necessarily consider the proposed productivist welfare state to be just according to their particular views of justice, such as libertarian, liberal, egalitarian, utilitarian, or prioritarian views of justice. Nevertheless, if the members of society are rational and aim to ensure mutually beneficial peaceful long-term cooperation compared to violent conflict resolution, then they will have sufficient reasons to embrace the institutional structures of the proposed democratic productivist welfare state as a minimal common denominator for their society.

Stated differently, my argument suggests that democratic societies that are deeply morally pluralistic with regard to distributive questions function best if their institutional structures do not promote a particular view of justice, but human flourishing more generally, expressed in terms of individual and collective social and economic productivity. In this sense, under the circumstances described, the proposed democratic productivist welfare state is not assumed to represent a transitional state towards a more full-fledged welfare state. Instead, it represents a minimum common denominator for societies that are characterized by deep moral pluralism concerning distributive questions, as may be the case for many modern democratic societies in our globalized world.⁴⁶

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NOTES

¹ For my argument, I assume that the legitimacy of the state as a political authority with the right to rule is not questioned *per se*. For discussion of the justification of the state, see Schmidtz (1990).

² For further discussion of the productivist welfare state in this context, see Holliday (2000) and Choi (2012).

³ For Esping-Andersen's seminal work on the classification of welfare state regimes, see Esping-Andersen (1990).

⁴ Although I employ the Aristotelian principle for my argument, I do not defend an Aristotelian (virtue-based) concept of justice. For discussion of Aristotelian concepts of justice, see Hope (2013: 165-6).

⁵ For critical discussion of the relationship between questions of distributive justice and political justice, see Van Schoelandt and Gaus (forthcoming).

⁶ For discussion of the notion of political feasibility, see Lawford-Smith (2013). For a more general discussion of feasibility considerations in the context of normative theory building, see Brennan (2013).

⁷ For a left-libertarian defense of the unconditional basic income on the grounds that agents have a right to natural resources, see Steiner (2009: 6).

⁸ For a defense of child support and, more strongly, the abolition of child poverty as "...*sine qua non* for a sustainable, efficient, and competitive knowledge-based production system," see Esping-Andersen (2002: 28). In this context, see also Olsaretti (2013) and Bou-Habib and Olsaretti (2013).

⁹ For discussion of Rawls' concept of fair equality of opportunity, see Arneson (1999).

¹⁰ For further discussion of this point, see Moehler (2009: 200).

¹¹ See also Moehler (2010: 447-73).

¹² I follow Rawls (1971: 3) in my assumption that the demands of distributive principles apply primarily to the basic structure of society and not to individuals, although such institutional demands may be derived from individual choices. In substance, however, I defend a Hobbesian welfare state as described, in principle, by Morris (1988: 664-9).

¹³ See Smith (1776: Book 4, Chapter 2, Section 9). For a defense of capitalism over socialism on grounds of individual (real) freedom and economic efficiency, see Van Parijs (1995: 186-233).

¹⁴ Many classical liberal economic thinkers, such as Adam Smith, defend market interventions for various different reasons, as Satz (2007) clarifies. For further discussion of the position of classical liberalism, see Tomasi (2012: 1-26).

¹⁵ For further discussion and microanalysis of the mechanisms (such as economies of scale, gains from trade, risk pooling, commitment power, and information transmission) that, together with adequate social institutions, best allow the realization of cooperative gains in practice, see Heath (2006).

¹⁶ See Hobbes (1651, Part 1, Chapter 13).

¹⁷ In the context of social rights, Esping-Andersen (1990: 35-54), refers to this condition as 'de-commodification', because it allows agents to maintain a livelihood that is independent of market forces and, in this sense, independent of their value as commodities.

¹⁸ Van Parijs (1991: 105) and (1995: 30-57) argues for an unconditional basic income at the highest economically sustainable level. The idea of a basic income, in principle, finds support from libertarian thinkers such as Hayek (1944: 89-90) in the form of a minimal safety net, and Friedman (1962: 190-6) in the form of a negative income tax. For discussion of classical liberalism's stand concerning the poor, see Zwolinski (2011) and Tomasi (2012: 123-61).

¹⁹ As indicated, I do not discuss explicitly the situation of disabled persons here, because their situation requires specific consideration.

²⁰ For discussion of potential problems associated with the determination of basic human needs, see Dorsey (2012: 17-9).

²¹ See Goodin (1992) and (1995: 228-43).

²² See Gaus (1998: 16-26).

²³ For this point, see also Pressman (2005: 165-6).

²⁴ See Levine (1995: 265).

²⁵ See, however, Schmidtz, in Schmidtz and Goodin (1998: 89), who has concerns of this kind.

²⁶ For discussion of the topic of intrinsic work motivation and its impact on human wellbeing and the economy, see Lane (1991: 364-422). Based on empirical data, Lane (1991: 421) argues that “[p]eople who are intrinsically motivated and rewarded at work live longer, learn more, and are more creative and happier than those who are primarily motivated by pay.”

²⁷ See Lane (1991: 335-56 and 427-589).

²⁸ For the notion of ‘meaningful work’, see Roessler (2012).

²⁹ I purposely do not use the term ‘exploitation’ in this context due to its different usages in the literature and too broad scope for my analysis. For a particular concept of exploitation that, although it is moralized, may be considered relevant for my discussion, see Snyder (2013). See also Goodin (1988: 123-52) and Wertheimer (1996).

³⁰ See Groot (2004: 69-91). Groot considers implementing a substantial basic income as the best policy response to address unemployment-induced problems in modern welfare states.

³¹ For further discussion of the notion of cultural work, see Banks et al. (2013: 1-15).

³² For further discussion of this topic, see especially Waring (1988).

³³ For an argument that considers welfare payments for the poor to be morally justified if the poor are poor because society does not have enough paid jobs for them, see Waldron (1993: 225-49).

³⁴ In this context, see also Van Parijs (1992b: 222-34), although Van Parijs does not invoke the Aristotelian principle for his defense of the unconditional basic income. For discussion of the notion of ‘work ethos’ related to the justification of the unconditional basic income in the liberal egalitarian tradition, see Birnbaum (2011: 399-400).

³⁵ For discussion of the principle of reciprocity, see Segall (2005).

³⁶ For a defense of so-called ‘free riders’ that relies on an argument of shared ownership of resources, see Van Parijs (1991: 121). See also Levine (1995: 268-72).

³⁷ For detailed discussion of the situation of welfare mothers in the United States, see Reese (2005).

³⁸ For discussion of the companion effect, see Wall (2013: 582-3).

³⁹ I do not defend a post-productivist welfare state that assumes that economic productivity can be sustained without necessarily employing all productive capacities of society (which may or may not be true) and takes a relaxed attitude with regard to agents’ willingness to work. For discussion of the post-productivist welfare state, see Goodin (2001). For a justification of the unconditional basic income as a nonproductivist measure, although with a slightly different understanding of the term, see Offe (1992).

⁴⁰ For further discussion of the notion of perfectionism and its rejection in the context of a liberal theory of the state, see Quong (2011).

⁴¹ A large amount of literature has been produced on the topic of historical injustices. Examples include Morris (1984), Waldron (1992), Simmons (1995), Kukathas (2003), Boxill (2003), Sher (2005), Cohen (2009), and Amighetti and Nuti (2015).

⁴² For the purpose of my argument, I limit discussion to historical injustices within particular societies and not between societies or between individuals from different societies.

⁴³ Nozick’s theory of justice addresses historical injustices by a ‘principle of rectification’. Nozick acknowledges, however, that in practice it is almost always impossible to gain the information necessary to apply this principle. This reasoning leads Nozick (1974: 231) to consider, for practical purposes, a version of Rawls’ difference principle as a principle of distributive justice that demands to “...organize society so as to maximize the position of whatever group ends up least well-off in society.” For a detailed discussion of Nozick’s principle of rectification, see Tebble (2001).

⁴⁴ For a selection of such arguments, see Van Parijs (1992a).

⁴⁵ For concrete suggestions on how to best introduce (gradually) an unconditional basic income in existing welfare states, see Groot (2004: 115-33).

⁴⁶ As Holliday (2000: 721) argues, globalization “...could help make productivist welfare capitalism something of an international standard in the twenty-first century.” I am very grateful to Pamela Hale, Rory Malone, Christian Matheis, Wayne Moore, Nicolaus Tideman, Chad Van Schoelandt, Steven Wall, Fabian Wendt, and the reviewers of this journal for helpful discussions and comments on earlier versions of this article.

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