



Radical Pluralism: A Liberal Defence of Unconditionality

Almaz Zelleke *

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* Independent Scholar, Brooklyn, New York, <azelleke@att.net>

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Abstract

Advocates of a basic income conditional on work or participation requirements often point to the reciprocity principle as justification. Reciprocity requires “doing one’s bit” in return for monetary benefits like basic income, or as a universal requirement of citizenship. But the implications of the reciprocity principle extend far beyond basic income, and if taken seriously lead to a paternalistic society at odds with liberal ideals. This paper presents a liberal defence of unconditional basic income, based on a radically pluralist notion of citizenship that considers the economic sphere to be as important an arena of citizenship as the political sphere.

1. Introduction

The idea of a conditional basic income has widespread support. Even the United States can now be said to have a modest income grant for those who work, in the form of the Earned-Income Tax Credit (EITC).¹ The EITC is available to low-income workers without children, but at such a low level - a maximum of \$364 for incomes up to \$10,710 - as to be considered trivial.² The extension of the EITC under President Clinton's administration to single, childless adults established a very modest income grant for individual low-wage workers. EITC expansion now has supporters across the political spectrum.³

The expansion of the EITC in the United States was part of the reform of the welfare system that strictly limited eligibility for categorical welfare grants. As such, it was a shift in benefits from the non-working poor to the working poor, enforcing the current consensus in the United States for conditioning benefits for the poor on employment.⁴ In the United States, conditioning benefits for the poor on employment is usually justified by the taxpayers' right to make demands of those they support, and by the benefits of employment for the poor themselves. In the literature on basic income, on the other hand, conditional benefits are usually justified on the basis of the reciprocity principle.

¹The EITC currently pays up to \$4,000 to families with at least two children, with another \$600 per child under the new Child Tax Credit.

² All in all, the federal benefit comes to less than \$2,000 on a per person basis in the most generous case, with some additional EITC benefits available in a few states. The EITC for workers without children provides a maximum benefit of \$364 for incomes up to \$10,710.

³ Republicans as well as Democrats have supported efforts to increase the EITC for married couples and for families with three or more children, and to increase the refundable portion of the Child Tax Credit. See Robert Greenstein "The Changes the New Tax Law Makes in Refundable Tax Credits for Low-Income Working Families" (June 18, 2001) and "Should EITC Benefits be Enlarged for Families with Three or More Children?" (July 10, 2000) on the Centre on Budget and Policy Priorities web site at www.cbpp.org/6-14-01tax.htm and www.cbpp.org/3-14-00tax.htm, respectively.

⁴ For an elaboration of this point of view, see Lawrence M. Mead, *The New Politics of Poverty: The Nonworking Poor in America* (Basic Books, 1992), and Lawrence M. Mead, ed., *The New Paternalism: Supervisory Approaches to Poverty* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 1997).

The reciprocity principle requires individuals to contribute in some way in return for the benefits they receive from society as a whole. Its intuitive appeal is obvious: who could object to the notion that one should contribute to, as well as take from a pool of limited resources? In the case of basic income, the reciprocity principle has been interpreted to mean that those who receive income benefits should be willing to work in return, since those benefits are typically financed by taxes on those who do work. Some more lenient interpreters of the reciprocity principle suggest that beneficiaries could fulfil their responsibilities through participation in community service.

But the implications of this interpretation of the reciprocity principle extend far beyond conditioning basic income on work or community service, and if taken seriously lead to an intrusive, paternalistic society at odds with liberal ideals. An examination of its implications demonstrates that the choice between a conditional and an unconditional basic income is not a minor decision, something to be compromised over if politically necessary, as some would have it, but a choice between two fundamentally incompatible visions of society.

In this paper I examine the case for the reciprocity principle made by four commentators. I explore its implications, not only for basic income recipients, but also for society at large. I then present a defence of the liberal society of which an unconditional basic income is a fundamental element, a position I term radical pluralism.

2. Advocates of the reciprocity principle

2.1 Stuart White

Stuart White's view of reciprocity is grounded in Kantian ethics, and specifically in the objection to exploitation. In an article critiquing Philippe Van Parijs's *Real Freedom for All*, White argues that the principle of reciprocity requires a reciprocal contribution in return for the benefits of social cooperation,

and that refusing to make such a contribution exploits one's fellow citizens, treating them as "just instruments to one's own well-being."⁵

White agrees with Van Parijs that liberal egalitarianism entitles all citizens to a fair share of the value of natural resources and the value of previous generations' contributions to resources that are the result of social cooperation, but he disagrees with him about the entitlement to a fair share of the benefits of current social cooperation, including employment rents.⁶ In response to Van Parijs's contention that the benefits of social cooperation are largely due to "brute luck" and are therefore not deserved, White replies that the reciprocity principle does not require a strictly proportional contribution, which would have the effect of rewarding those with a "luckier" basket of skills and opportunities, but merely requires "doing one's bit," according to one's abilities. He calls this "baseline reciprocity," and formulates its resulting distributive principle as follows: "Each person is entitled to a share of the economic benefits of social cooperation conferring equal opportunity (or real freedom) in return for the performance of an equal handicap-weighted quantum of contributive activity (hours of socially useful work, let us say, weighted by labour intensity)".⁷ Under baseline reciprocity, a substantial basic income would be justified, but it would be conditional on willingness to work.

White is ambiguous about whether the work required under baseline reciprocity would have to be paid employment outside the home, and he is unsure about how much work of whatever kind should be required.⁸ Most importantly, he does not provide an explanation for why the reciprocal contribution, if justified, must take the form of work.

⁵ Stuart White, "Liberal Equality, Exploitation, and the Case for an Unconditional Basic Income," *Political Studies*, vol. 45 (June 1997), pp. 312-26, at 318.

⁶ Without the value of employment rents included, White agrees with Van Parijs, only a partial unconditional basic income can be financed. *Ibid.*, p. 321.

⁷ "Liberal Equality," p. 318.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 319.

2.2 Amy Gutmann and Dennis Thompson

Amy Gutmann and Dennis Thompson's *Democracy and Disagreement* makes the case for conditional benefits, or workfare, in the context of a discussion of the role of deliberation in resolving moral disagreements in the political sphere.⁹ Deliberative democracy describes not the outcomes of the political process, but the ways in which disagreement is resolved; citizens are more likely to accept outcomes with which they disagree as long as all reasonable claims have been fairly considered. Gutmann and Thompson identify the conditions of deliberative democracy as reciprocity, publicity, and accountability, and the content of deliberative democracy as basic liberty, basic opportunity, and fair opportunity. According to Gutmann and Thompson, these principles can guide a provisional resolution of the disagreement between supporters of an unconditional basic income and supporters of workfare.¹⁰

Deliberative democracies require some system of income supports for the poor to fulfil the principle of basic opportunity.¹¹ The way in which income supports are provided should be guided by the principle of reciprocity. In contrast to many American advocates of workfare who believe the poor should strive for independence, Gutmann and Thompson argue that reciprocity implies a web of mutual dependence among citizens.¹² Income supports are made possible by those who participate in productive economic activity, and therefore it is wrong for those who require income supports to refuse to participate in the "scheme of fair

⁹ Amy Gutmann and Dennis Thompson, *Democracy and Disagreement* (Harvard University Press, 1996).

¹⁰ Because the emphasis of deliberative democracy is on the continuing deliberation over matters of moral disagreement, rather than their resolution according to abstract principle, the conclusions of an academic inquiry can only be guidelines for what happens in practice. *Ibid.*, p. 50.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 273-74.

¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 276, 282-85, 292-93. "The aim is not to seek independence for its own sake. It is rather to secure a limited dependence - enough to avoid dependence that interferes with basic opportunities." *Ibid.* at p. 292.

social cooperation” that makes such supports possible.¹³ Societies which provide income support “cannot be neutral between ways of life that contribute to economic productivity and those that do not.”¹⁴

But reciprocity requires also that society secure some of the conditions necessary to make work a possibility for the poor; after all, if they experienced no barriers to work they might not need income supports at all. “Fair workfare” as Gutmann and Thompson term it, requires government action to “make work pay” through an expanded EITC, a system of enforcement and government guarantee of child support, and full employment policies.¹⁵ “The obligations of welfare should be mutual: citizens who need income support are obligated to work, but only if their fellow citizens fulfil their obligation to enact public policies that provide adequate employment and child support.”¹⁶

Gutmann and Thompson consider work to be one of the foundations of citizenship, a “necessary condition of...social dignity”,¹⁷ although they are ambiguous about whether that work must be paid employment outside the home.¹⁸ They argue that those who are wealthy enough to choose not to work may be judged lacking. “If they choose to exempt themselves from a scheme of social cooperation, they may rightly be denied the equal respect of citizens who are motivated to support social cooperation.”¹⁹ They argue that such a view of work might lead to steeper inheritance taxes being imposed on the wealthy, but these taxes are not part of their program of fair workfare. Thus, while the wealthy may

¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 279-80

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 280.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 294.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 276.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 293

¹⁸ They say both that poor parents with young children should be required to work outside the home, and elsewhere that “having a job” includes working in the home in a household where others work outside the home. *Ibid.*, pp. 297-98, 293.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 280.

be denied respect, the poor may be forced to work, as long as the conditions of fair workfare have been met.

2.3 Robert J. van der Veen

Robert van der Veen calls for a “political theory” of basic income in a review article on Van Parijs’ *Real Freedom for All* and some of its critiques.²⁰ He notes that replacing traditional forms of welfare with basic income changes the relationship of the citizen to the state, and to the society generally, because of its unconditionality; this elevates the debate over basic income from the realm of policy to the realm of philosophy, and requires something more than instrumental justification.²¹

Van der Veen views the reciprocity principle as the most challenging political theory in opposition to an unconditional basic income. The reciprocity principle is an attractive political theory because of the intuitive appeal of the notion of everyone “doing one’s bit”.²² Van der Veen’s search for a compromise between reciprocity and the right to a fair share of society’s external resources leads him to propose a weak form of A.B. Atkinson’s participation income,²³ without the governmentally-defined and enforced participation criteria, which must be abandoned because they cannot escape being contentious and intrusive. Instead, van der Veen proposes unconditional payments with state support of participation in activities that promote “the full inclusion of citizens in the democratic community”.²⁴ “The government would be asked to subsidize an

²⁰ Robert J. van der Veen, “Real Freedom versus Reciprocity: Competing Views on the Justice of Unconditional Basic Income,” *Political Studies*, vol. 46 (March 1998), pp. 140-63.

²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 140-41.

²² White, “Liberal Equality,” p. 319, quoted in van der Veen, “Real Freedom versus Reciprocity,” at p. 159.

²³ See A. B. Atkinson, *Public Economics in Action: The Basic Income/Flat Tax Proposal* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), pp. 16-17; *Poverty in Europe* (Blackwell, 1998), pp. 145-46; and “The Case for a Participation Income,” *Political Quarterly*, vol. 67 (January-March 1996), pp. 67-70.

²⁴ Van der Veen, “Real Freedom versus Reciprocity,” p. 162.

‘infrastructure of participation’ in created jobs, support of voluntary community services, and it would be expected to propagandize the attractions of entry into these’.²⁵

This “compromise” between an unconditional basic income and reciprocity sounds at first like a clear win for unconditionality, since participation would not be enforced. For the compromise to succeed, however, it requires that enforcement be shifted from the government to the community. As van der Veen acknowledges, without a governmentally enforced participation requirement some surfers will get through without making any contribution (other than surfing). “But,” he says “there would be less of such cases, if the unconditional grants were accompanied by what I have called the ‘infrastructure of participation’: a range of publicly financed supporting policies which aim to bring about widespread conformity to the norm of contribution”.²⁶

Van der Veen thus presents a variation on basic income, which he terms the de-conditionalized form of participation income: a guaranteed minimum that is not conditional but is based on widespread acceptance of and conformity to the norm of universal employment and socially useful unpaid work.²⁷ His “political theory” of basic income, then, combines Van Parijs’ economic libertarianism with an anti-pluralistic social ethic similar to that of some of the supporters of workfare.²⁸ Whether his approach would succeed in generating widespread adherence to the norm of contribution is an open question, as is the question of whether an expensive program of social infrastructure creation in addition to a basic income would generate widespread political support. But what is clear is

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 159 (emphasis added).

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 160 (emphasis added).

²⁷ In fact, van der Veen argues for only a partial basic income, below subsistence level, rather than Van Parijs’ highest sustainable basic income, and for “appropriately conditional supplementary benefits” as necessary. *Ibid.*

²⁸ For a review of the relevant literature on workfare, see my “Basic Income in the United States: Redefining Citizenship in the Liberal State,” paper presented at the First Congress of the U.S. Basic Income Guarantee Network, New York City, March 8, 2002 (available in the U.S. BIG Discussion Paper Series at <http://www.widerquist.com/usbig/index.html>).

that van der Veen does not succeed in forging a liberal compromise between advocates of unconditionality and advocates of reciprocity.

3. The reciprocity principle examined

3.1 The ideal of reciprocity

As a review of the work of reciprocity advocates demonstrates, reciprocity is a conveniently (or maddeningly, depending on one's point of view) general principle from which to draw conclusions about social policy. At its most general, the idea of reciprocity simply articulates an undeniable feature of stable social life that individuals both contribute to and receive benefits from organized interaction in community with others. Where reciprocity is not the rule, society is unstable: those who contribute disproportionately to what they receive will be tempted to rebel or flee. Between communities, reciprocity can take on a more specific meaning: in trade, for example, one state may lift tariffs on imports on condition that the other state does the same. In this case, the reciprocity is quite literal.

Within communities, reciprocity is difficult to particularize in the same way, because of the division of labour and distribution of roles inherent in communal life, and the efficiencies to be gained in seemingly non-reciprocal behaviour. One example (perhaps the only one) of true reciprocity within communities is universal military service. Putting one's life at risk to protect the community that exists in large part to protect its citizens is the paradigm of reciprocity among citizens. But most of communal life does not embody the reciprocity principle so clearly. When the road crew comes to pave the street outside my house, I don't reciprocate by paving the street in front of their houses in turn. I pay taxes into the fund that pays their salaries, and if their streets need paving they do it themselves. Is this reciprocity, or is it simply one of the many sub-contracts that make up the larger social contract under which individuals and groups negotiate fair terms for the provision and receipt of a range of services? Even the case of military service looks less paradigmatic when examined closely. Women are exempted from military service in most of the world, and most nations have moved from universal male conscription to a professional army, much like a professional road

crew. Only a few states - Switzerland among them - maintain a form of this most obviously reciprocal institution.²⁹

If the reciprocity principle does not govern the provision of services in society, what could justify its governance over the provision of benefits, like basic income? Its advocates make two distinct arguments. White, and Gutmann and Thompson make a principled argument, that those who benefit from social cooperation should be required to contribute to it in kind, while van der Veen makes a political argument, that basic income cannot achieve widespread support without the expectation of contributory activities on the part of its recipients. I address each of these arguments in turn.

3.2 Reciprocity and work requirements

White, and Gutmann and Thompson claim that a basic income that is not conditional on a work contribution is exploitative of those whose work makes basic income possible. Van Parijs makes a convincing counter argument that in modern societies access to jobs that pay above what a basic income would pay are a scarce resource whose distribution relies to a certain extent not on desert but on luck, and that therefore the redistribution of a portion of the value of jobs in the form of a basic income is justified.³⁰ I will not rehearse his argument here, and will instead focus on three other objections to the argument from exploitation.

First, the imposition of selective work requirements - work requirements only for those who receive basic income - assumes that it is a selective benefit. It assumes the existence of two stable classes over time - those who work and receive no basic income, and those who receive basic income and do no work. But basic income is a universal benefit, available to all whose incomes fall below a certain amount for whatever reason, at any time. For those who choose to work,

²⁹ Mickey Kaus is the only American workfare advocate who also calls for universal conscription (for men and women) as part of his proposed reform of the welfare state. He justifies his proposals on the grounds of civic equality rather than reciprocity. See *The End of Equality* (Basic Books, 1992).

³⁰ Philippe Van Parijs, *Real Freedom for All: What (If Anything) Can Justify Capitalism?* (Oxford University Press, 1995), pp. 106-09.

to earn an income higher than the basic income, it may serve only as insurance against unemployment or underemployment, but it also makes possible a leave for family or personal reasons, or a switch to part-time work, which unemployment insurance alone does not. But basic income is only one social benefit among many financed by taxes on income. Those who choose never to avail themselves of basic income are no more exploited than those whose taxes pay for the upkeep of parks they choose never to visit.

Second, the imposition of selective work requirements only for those who receive basic income also ignores the many other financial benefits that are financed by taxes on income and yet are available to those who do not work. If the recipients of basic income must work to reciprocate for their benefits, why not the recipients of other tax system benefits, like the mortgage interest deduction, or social security spousal benefits, or those who send their children to public schools? Of course, anyone who is able to claim such benefits without having earned income is likely to give them up before submitting to a work requirement, but the fact remains that society engages in many forms of economic distribution that benefit classes of individuals without submitting each to a work test. Why should the work test be reserved for recipients of basic income alone?

Finally, advocates of selective work requirements fail to make a convincing case that paid employment is the appropriate form of reciprocation for basic income. White, Gutmann and Thompson acknowledge the socially contributory nature of much unpaid work - child rearing, care giving, volunteering, and community work - but hesitate to recognize this as a substitute for paid work for anyone other than partners of employed workers. This, together with the absence of any criteria about the kind of job that counts as a social contribution other than that it is paid - which includes, one assumes, tobacco marketing, handgun manufacture, and other nefarious though legal activities - adds up to an apology for the status quo in which the behaviour of the poor is subject to intrusive scrutiny while those with economic resources enjoy privacy and liberal neutrality about their life choices. There is an argument to be made for this kind of economic paternalism - workfare advocates like Lawrence Mead have made it

forcefully - but it cannot be derived from a rigorous application of the principle of reciprocity.

3.3 Reciprocity and participation requirements

It is clear that if the reciprocity principle has any meaning at all in the realm of social policy it must result in a universal, rather than a selective obligation, and in a more expansive understanding of social contribution than merely paid employment. Van der Veen's "compromise" between reciprocity and unconditionality recognizes this, and clearly expresses the intuition that all should make a social contribution and have a say in what counts as a social contribution. Van der Veen and others who argue for participation requirements, like Atkinson, paint an attractive picture of recognition for currently unpaid social contributions without requiring the state to get involved in large-scale job creation, and without wading into the morass of trying to compensate care giving and other voluntary activities directly.³¹

The expansiveness of what counts as a contribution differentiates van der Veen's position from the employment bias of White, Gutmann and Thompson, and workfare advocates like Lawrence Mead, but not from their paternalism. Whether the social contribution is monitored by the state, as Atkinson proposes, or by one's fellow citizens, as van der Veen implies, individuals are subject to monitoring and sanctions when their behaviour fails to conform to the expectations of others. For those currently subject to the monitoring of means

³¹ Contrast the socialist argument for work requirements of Andre Gorz, for example, who has in the past argued for universal work requirements and basic income as a condition of full citizenship, in order to give every individual the opportunity to participate in productive work and feel the kind of pride that only earning a pay check can bring. But his version of conditional basic income stipulated non-reproductive work in the public sphere in order to liberate low-wage and unpaid service and domestic workers from what are often socially isolating positions. See Andre Gorz "On the Difference between Society and Community, and Why Basic Income Cannot by Itself Confer Full Membership of Either," in *Arguing for Basic Income: Ethical Foundations for a Radical Reform*, Philippe Van Parijs, ed. (London: Verso, 1992), pp. 178-84; and "Reshaping the Welfare State: The Conservative Approach and its Socialist Alternative," *Praxis International*, vol. 6, no. 1 (1986), pp. 5-12. See also *Capitalism, Socialism, Ecology*, trans. Chris Turner (London: Verso, 1994); and *Critique of Economic Reason [Metamorphoses du travail: Quete du sens]*, trans. Gillian Handyside and Chris Turner (London: Verso, 1989).

tests and work requirements in categorical welfare programs, “deconditionalized participation requirements” represent a liberalizing of the conditions of their benefits but what about for the rest of society?

4. The liberal alternative of radical pluralism

In one sense, the debate between advocates and opponents of the unconditionality of basic income can be seen as a disagreement over the priority of benefits and obligations, with advocates of unconditionality like Van Parijs, for example, arguing that the entitlement of a basic income should be guaranteed before the obligations of reciprocity come into play,³² and with advocates of conditionality arguing that work is a basic responsibility that ought to be fulfilled before basic income is considered. But in another sense the disagreement is much more fundamental and goes to the heart of the social contract.

Advocates of reciprocity are guilty of one of two sins: either they want the poor to conform to their notion of good citizenship, while those with resources do as they choose, or they want everyone to conform to a dominant set of values centred around gainful employment. The first sin depends on viewing the poor as morally responsible for their poverty, a view that is simply indefensible in a modern, capitalist state with extensive private property and inheritance rights. The second sin is authoritarian in nature: as worthy as gainful employment or social contribution may be, if basic income is financially feasible without a work requirement - a big “if” certainly, but no one has shown that it is not - why should anyone work who does not want to?

An unconditional basic income is not an incremental change, but a revolutionary one, “a profound reform that belongs in the same league as the abolition of slavery or the introduction of universal suffrage,” as Van Parijs has

³² Philippe Van Parijs, “Reciprocity and the Justification of an Unconditional Basic Income. Reply to Stuart White,” *Political Studies*, vol. 45 (June 1997), pp. 327-30, at 329-30.

written.³³ And if the liberal or real libertarian argument, as he terms it, is right, surfers are no less deserving of our respect than double-shift parents, since we are under no moral obligation to use what is legitimately ours in any socially-approved manner. The radical pluralism implied by this view requires another kind of justification if it is to survive the critique of those who advocate a conditional basic income.

How do we justify this radical pluralism? The American context offers two thriving institutions as examples of radical pluralism to which we can appeal: the market economy and the democratic polity. As many basic income advocates have noted, basic income, or its close cousin the negative income tax, is the favoured form of welfare benefit of economists of all political stripes, including Milton Friedman and the late James Tobin in the United States, and James Meade, A.B. Atkinson and Samuel Brittan in Great Britain, among others. Economists prefer basic income to categorical grants, wage supplements, or large-scale governmental job creation because basic income interferes less with the efficient functioning of the market than these other alternatives, even with the higher marginal tax rates necessary to finance it. Even Friedrich von Hayek, the most passionate defender of laissez-faire economics, wrote positively about redistributive measures that do not interfere with the market's allocative function.³⁴

But market considerations should do more than merely give a green light to basic income as an acceptable form of welfare. The free-market economy derives its legitimacy not only from the high standard of living it enables, but from the

³³ Philippe Van Parijs, "Competing Justifications of Basic Income," in Van Parijs, ed. *Arguing for Basic Income*, p. 7.

³⁴ See F.A. Hayek, *The Political Order of a Free People*, vol. 3 of *Law, Legislation and Liberty* (University of Chicago Press, 1979), p. 55, for example, where he writes "The assurance of a certain minimum income for everyone, or a sort of floor below which nobody need fall even when he is unable to provide for himself, appears not only to be a wholly legitimate protection against a risk common to all, but a necessary part of the Great Society in which the individual no longer has specific claims on the members of the particular small group into which he was born." Hayek specifically distinguishes a guaranteed minimum from a "just" distribution of incomes. He strongly rejected the government distribution of employment according to any pattern or principle other than that of spontaneous order.

liberty it provides those who participate in it to pursue their own preferences, subject to the constraints of their own resources and what they can trade for with others. The free market leads to better outcomes - outcomes more closely matched to individual preferences, that is - than other economic systems. This is true on condition that each begins with something to trade. It is no accident that philosophical analyses of property rights, distributive justice, and exploitation begin with scenarios of natural resources divided equally among the population - Lazy and Crazy, Able and Infirm, and so on. The equal division of resources which one is then free to trade according to one's preferences makes intuitive sense. The trouble begins when unforeseen events alter preferences when resources have already been allocated, or when offspring come along and find themselves constrained by a previous generation's choices. How do we recreate the initial egalitarian distribution to preserve the legitimacy of the market once we leave the ideal state?

There may be no way to do so completely, at least without fatally disrupting the workings of the market, but basic income can be seen as a partial solution. It need not (re)create a completely egalitarian distribution to have significantly egalitarian effects, providing each individual with renewable resources to save, consume, or invest as he or she sees fit, and thus maintaining for each an inalienable right to participate in the economy, much as the democratic system maintains our inalienable right to participate in politics. We make no claim that all citizens have equal political power in a democracy; representative democracy in fact ensures that some - those we elect - will have more power than the rest of us. But the right to vote together with periodic elections means that however foolishly we "spend" our votes in one election, we still get to vote in the next election, which is never too far off. The market is no less important a sphere of citizenship than the polity, and the ground rules should be similarly egalitarian. No less, and perhaps no more.

I characterize this approach as radical pluralism, because it has no place for any constraints on what recipients may do with their basic income, just as there are virtually no constraints on what one may do with earned income; nor does it have any place for restraints on qualification, just as there are virtually no

qualifications required for citizens to vote. It should go without saying that a market-based approach to justifying basic income cannot be conditional on work, since only market pricing and individual preferences for more income than basic income provides should determine who works and who does not. Under this approach, basic income provides some compensation for the unpaid care giving and voluntary activities envisioned in the participation requirement advocated by Atkinson and van der Veen and others, but it also requires us to endorse the rights of fellow citizens to behave badly, squandering their basic income on lottery tickets and liquor, or surfboards and tickets to Malibu.

5. Conclusion

What I have presented here is the framework of the case for a radically pluralistic notion of citizenship, to counter the paternalistic notion that threatens to dominate the basic income debate. The willingness of reciprocity advocates imposing constraints on the liberty of individuals in order to achieve a patterned outcome - a society in which everyone conforms to dominant norms - conflicts with the libertarian ethos, which so clearly underlies the idea of basic income. To be sure, libertarian capitalism is a mixed blessing, responsible for so much of the inequality and insecurity the welfare state is designed to mitigate, but responsible also for the surplus that makes a generous welfare state, or basic income, a possibility. Pairing a libertarian economic sphere with a paternalistic social sphere seems like the worst of both worlds. Liberals who believe in fairness should reject the reciprocity principle for the poor unless they are willing to see it applied to their own life choices. Those who cherish their own liberty must defend an alternative vision if an unconditional basic income is to survive reciprocity's paternalistic assault on the liberty of the poor.