

# Ecological Expansion of Basic Income: Beyond Capitalism

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## Abstract

Discussions on basic income mostly presume that the capitalism is an appropriate, at least practical, system for a human society. The basic income seems an auxiliary tool to guarantee social justice by minimizing side effect of capitalism. The future economic system, however, would not be the same as the today. In future no human labor would be needed to produce commodities. Most work will be institutional and operational. No labor, but only capital. Thus we have to prepare for such a future. What should a social and economic system be in future? What kind of institutional and operational relation among persons will be just? In nature nearly no organisms produce their food by themselves. Organisms of previous steps in a food chain just flourish and organisms of next steps simply eat only some of them. Unlike what Darwin assumed, in nature, food is not frequently in shortage. It is difficult to find concrete examples of extinction caused by competition among species. Only in human societies, supply is not frequently enough to survive or satisfy limitless desire. Of course, we cannot say that organismal world is just, or more just than human world. Human being, however, always tries to evaluate anything, even nature. Thus ecologists have devised tools to evaluate conceptual goodness of ecosystems. One of them is the concept

of biodiversity. The higher the value of biodiversity is, the better the ecosystem is. Higher biodiversity does not simply mean more number of species in an ecosystem than in another ecosystem. It tells us more even distribution of species in the ecosystem than in another. The concept of biodiversity would provide conceptual foundation for basic income and a devising frame for fair future societies without traditional labor, therefore, social justice. Ecologists have devised measure to assess biodiversity reflecting anthropocentric notion of equity, number and evenness. Accidently such anthropocentric measures succeed in presenting the degree of stability of communities at large. Basic income will be a device, which materializes ecological equity in human society.

#### I. What makes being human peculiar?

Is human different from the other life forms? We are not sure whether the answer would be 'yes', or 'no.' Biologically saying, no fundamental difference between human and the other forms. All are made of cells, have hierarchical anatomy, and even have the same genetic materials and physiology. Human, however, has thought that human, more strictly being human, is divinely different from the others. Is that right?

In an actual society, we see so many in-divine things that human being has done till now, and on. Human history has provided so many examples

of inhuman deed. People kill people without cause. Presumably, just for loyalty or allegiance to the greedy lord, for fun, or even for boredom. People humiliate and look down people without reason. Oh, just humble birth! Yes, that's right. The divine fate of slavery.

Now people think that such a caste system persists no longer in this world. Is that right? Maybe not. Although there is no apparent official caste in most countries, especially in highly industrialized countries, money is another divine criterion of social position, divine monetary caste.

Everybody says Thomas Jefferson's phrase, 'all men are created equal.' The phrase seems to declare equality before the law, and to promise a society without any discrimination before the law. All men are created equal; however, they are divinely born and raised unequal. In olden days, they had just inherited their parents. We call it ancestry. We do not know who have created the ancestry. Probably, divine force. It could be chance, strength, god, or money.

If you have a good chance, great physical strength, blessing revelation, or wealth, whether it is parent's or your own, you are grown in higher status. It seems natural. Right? Although you are created equal, your own or parent's effort makes you wealthy and powerful and gives you the right to throne. That is natural law. But what is the difference between natural law and the positive law, man-made law? Who does define

'natural?' Who does make 'the law?' People. Who, out of people? The divinely raised person. If he says, it should be right.

Because he has been divinely raised, he has all the right to get surplus value. Only his mercy makes workers survive. If he does not have any mercy on them of mean birth, they are all kept in poor conditions. Bill Gates' mercy makes several million workers all around the world happy without hunger. Bill Gates' share, which might be much greater than the sum of his workers' bags, is the just result of the divine society.

Does such divinity make human, being human, peculiar? Apparently, Yes. It is the reason why we work so hard and try to get higher position. After setting a divine device to collect money through labor of mean birth, anybody will get rich enough to buy power. It makes the life of a person exciting. That could be one of the features that make human divine. Is anything wrong in this answer? We will try to get the answer to the question.

II. Is basic income an auxiliary tool to guarantee social justice?

If everybody in a society earns basic income, will he be happy without discrimination? If so, how much will make him happy? Is the amount equivalent to the income that a worker gets after working for minimum

hours at a minimum wage enough for basic income? Probably it will not be enough.

Then is the basic income an auxiliary tool for everybody to be happy? More exactly speaking, the basic income might provide equity of opportunity. It will give everybody the same chance to set the divine device, at least a hope to get the chance. The chance. Will it actually make everybody happy? Definitely, no. If you buy a lottery ticket, you get a chance to win a prize. You, however, seldom win a prize. Just being futilely happy between buying and drawing. Will you repeat this thing in vain indefinitely?

To prevent being futilely happy, what does a society guarantee everybody? Huge amount of basic income for a government not to be capable of paying might not be an answer, especially when the government tries to get finances through taxation.

One of feasible answers is restructuring economic framework in a society. What kind of restructuring would be actualized?

III. What will produce commodities in future?

In a market a consumer gets commodities and a seller gets money. A manufacturer produces commodities using labor of workers by capital. The seller buys commodities from the manufacturer and the latter gets

money. Money comes from the consumer at the beginning. Then, where does the consumer get the money? I could not give an answer for this question in here because of its complication.

In equivalent exchange nobody gets profit or surplus value. They get exactly the value for that they pay. Without considering money matters anybody in the exchange gets a kind of surplus value that is added by labor. Then somebody realizes the hidden surplus value and extracts it from the equivalent exchange. Accumulation of the value becomes capital.

The capital, now, buys labor, i.e., employs workers. If a capitalist pays a worker a salary enough to compensate the value added by the latter, then the former does exchange for nothing. If the seller pays exactly the same amount that the capitalist pays, and gets the same amount from the consumer, then the seller does exchange in vain, too. But the capitalist and the seller also added some labor to the commodities, although not directly to the commodities themselves, via managing workers and enhancing accessibility, respectively. They can claim that they also create surplus value. That seems reasonable.

Anyhow, a market devices a method to extract any surplus value from such exchange with help of currency. As history goes, workers have recognized the capitalists' profit as exploitation of the surplus value that they created. Then workers resist against the exploitation.

Instead of sharing or getting reasonable profit, the capitalists have tried to enhance productivity by replacing workers by machine. This makes a society more complicated. It is getting more difficult to resolve conflict between workers and capitalists. Such replacement will be getting more and more intensified. If the current economic framework continues, we will see the end of the conflict. Without employment enough to consume the quantity of commodities to secure capitalists' profit, capitalists will also collapse down. If they just employ a part of potential workers, the society itself will collapse down because of economic polarization, hence of social polarization.

We could not totally deny that some incentive would be needed to make people productive. But it is not necessary that the incentive should be based on the traditional relationship of capitalists and workers. Of course, we cannot kick the market out of our society. Market-centered economic framework, however, will not support our future society any longer. For the future we have to transform the traditional economic framework into socio-economic framework to comply with economic growth without employment, or even with reduction of employment. How?

IV. How do ecologists evaluate ecosystems?

Human has learned a lot of things from nature. Sometimes human commits naturalistic fallacy (Wilson, et al., 2003). A person thinks that what is seen in nature is what ought be done; or good and right. We cannot apply what we get from observations in nature directly to social problems of ethics and politics. We should not extract any social value directly from the observations of nature themselves. I am not saying usage value of natural resource. I am saying a kind of intrinsic value. We should not tell that a natural entity has the worth of existence because it has a property that human can recognize and admire. We can say, however, what properties of nature shape its' today. And we can learn what conditions would persist human society as well as nature with no relation to ethics and politics.

Anyhow, human always wants to evaluate nature in the anthropocentric view point. One of such evaluation is the assessment of biodiversity (see Stilling, 2012: pp355-364). Nowadays people think that the higher is the biodiversity of an ecosystem, the better is the ecosystem. Is it true that the ecosystem with higher biodiversity is better, or even healthier than the ecosystem with lower biodiversity? The answer could be 'yes' or 'no.' It depends on the conditions of the ecosystem. Even so, it is very difficult to get an appropriate answer.

One simple reason to assess biodiversity is to compare different ecosystems, which look alike except for biota. Then, which is better? The ecosystem that seems to be more stable is better. The more stable



ecosystem, however, does not always have a higher value of biodiversity.

If we assume a stable ecosystem and more species are added into it by human, then the changed ecosystem will have some difficulties to adjust and reestablish relationships among all of the existing and introduced species. The resulting ecosystem might return into the original status, or replace some existing species with some introduced species with the total number of species unchanged or changed. Nobody can tell what will be the exact end of such disturbance.

Ecologists, however, have common notion with relation to biodiversity. An ecosystem should not be dominated by one or a few species. Such an ecosystem seems to be vulnerable to external disturbance as well as internal illness. Thus they devise a variety of mathematical methods to assess biodiversity, which incorporate the number of species and even distribution among species into a formula.

One of such methods is using Shannon Index. The index of an ecosystem can be calculated by the following formula:

$$H_S = - \sum p_i \ln p_i$$

Where  $p_i$  is the proportion of individuals found in the  $i$ th species,  $\ln$  is the natural logarithm, and  $\sum$  is a summation sign. The maximum value of

Shannon Index is always got when the abundance of each of all the species in an ecosystem is equal, that is, even distribution among species.

In practical application, the higher is the index of an ecosystem, the more resilient or more stable is the ecosystem. There seems to be correlation between biodiversity index and stability of ecosystems. This is the phenomenon that can be easily expected because ecologists have device the index to reflect notion of equity and stability according to the anthropocentric view point. Likewise human society with more even share of wealth among members might be more stable and will persist with less conflict. Then how does the nature maintain relatively higher biodiversity? Is there any intentional or divine force to maintain biodiversity in nature?

V. What is nature?

Let's watch ladybugs on a plant. Right after arriving on the plant, they devour aphids. As time passes, the number of aphids gets smaller and smaller. Ladybugs start to fly away because they are now not able to eat aphids enough to compensate the energy that they consume to seek preys. The last bug passes by without noticing aphids under its feet, but seeks thoroughly for an aphid. It even digs up leaf buds. At last the bug fly off for another plant. The plant left, however, has plenty aphids in

human eyes. Then, aphids thrive without a predator and prepare another feast for newly arriving ladybugs.

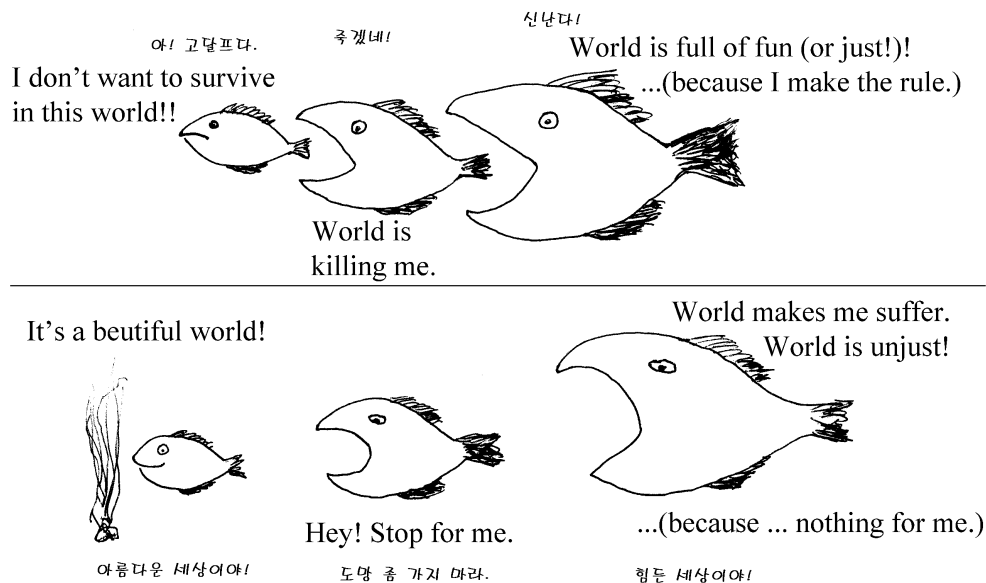
Why does the bug leave so many preys? Because the bug does have weak vision, it cannot recognize its prey unless the prey moves a lot. Its insufficient ability to see keeps aphids from being exterminated, and in result keeps its prey forever. That is the way that a predator and a prey can coexist without the end.

Aphids thrive with no intention of being ladybug's prey. They just reproduce. And ladybugs leave so many aphids with no intention of giving the prey another chance to thrive. They just eat and leave. Both of them are not interested in each other's fate. I mean that they are disinterested in each other.

Such insufficiency and disinterestedness makes 'frugal wisdom' for 'disinterested coexistence' (Jeung, 2005: p.46).

Yet, many people think that nature is the world of jungle in which the stronger prey on the weaker. Charles Darwin (1869: pp.91-92) argued the survival of the fittest after Herbert Spencer (1886: p.444). After he established the theory of natural selection, the notion that the stronger have a right to win and rule the weaker seemed justified biologically. Although such a thought is not correct, many people think that the law of

jungle is natural (see Figure). As matter of fact competition does not shape communities of ecosystems (Stilling, 2012: pp.354-355).



Nature is the disinterested world in that a predator does not dominate nor an herbivore dominates. The law of jungle, so called by human, simply justifies the exploitation and expropriation committed by the party who monopolizes money and power. They argue social justice before the rule that they revise arbitrarily. Modified from Jeung, 2005: p.114.

Likewise people think that the world of capital in which the capitalists have rights to monopolize surplus value is natural and just because they are divinely wiser, stronger and more diligent than the laborers. Now they are getting rid of laborers as many as possible in order to increase productivity by restructuring enterprises and/or societies.

As mentioned earlier, such a trend will lead the end of human history due to severe social polarization and thus extreme social conflict. The law of

jungle is, however, not natural or righteous. Thus we have to abolish the divine devise of capital and reestablish a new framework, which will secure the sustainability of our society. Then, what will be a better framework for the future?

## VII. How could we guarantee social equity?

Although we should not extract ethics and politics from what we observe in nature, we can get a hint from anthropocentric notion which tries to evaluate what ecosystems are good or bad. We cannot tell the ecosystem with higher biodiversity is necessarily better than the one with lower biodiversity. Ecologists have, however, the notion of equity in mind when they devise tools to assess biodiversity of ecosystems. More number of species and even distribution among species. The two are essential properties of ecological equity as well as social equity. That is natural because ecologists simply burrow equity notion to assess communities without considering adequateness of application of the anthropocentric notion to nature.

Accidentally values of biodiversity index positively correlate with resilience of ecosystems at large. Thus measure of biodiversity, number and evenness, could assess the degree of sustainability of a system, even a society.

The number and evenness could be the number of jobs and equality of

people in wealth, respectively. A variety of jobs are to be possible, and most jobs would not be involved in making traditional commodities. Some might be involved in self-enjoying, rather than providing service for others. Because future economic growth would be without increase of employment or even with decrease of employment, most future jobs would be self-satisfied but create no surplus value for a society.

The traditional market of commodities is still needed, but most people will not be involved in the market. Somehow the market and people should be connected. Probably through institutional measures. One of the measures will be basic income. Even though people do not create surplus value for their society, they should get income to exist as human being. Many people will be disinterested in others as are organisms in nature. Some device should prevent divine persons from monopolizing surplus value and make persons frugal institutionally. The state gets considerable surplus value with a certain way and pays people basic income. Then ecological equity will be materialized in human society.

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