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Contents

Chapter 6

Basic Income in the United States: Redefining Citizenship in the Liberal State

Almaz Zelleke

Introduction

In the United States, the debate over welfare reform has been dominated by those who believe welfare should be conditional on work. This domination holds both at the level of policy, with the passage of the 1996 Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA), and at the level of theory, with almost all welfare analysts, liberal and conservative, united on the importance of the integration of poor adults into the workforce as a condition not only of liberation from poverty but also as a prerequisite to full and equal citizenship. This argument holds sway in the United States not only because of its relatively full employment economy, but also because of its founding image as the land of opportunity where no barriers stand in the way of those who would work hard to achieve social, political, and economic liberty. Even among analysts of the American left who believe that this image is mythical for many Americans, for reasons of race, education, or socioeconomic background, it is hard to find any who advance an alternative conception of citizenship and independence that does not include paid employment as an essential element.

The re-emerging United States debate over basic income—a guaranteed minimum income distributed to each citizen as a right—stands alongside the debate over welfare reform, intersecting with it at certain points, especially over the question of conditionality on work requirements. Basic income has a broader scope than the welfare system, targeting many citizens not currently defined as welfare eligible or poor, but—like the welfare system—its greatest effect, should it be enacted, would be on the poor. And as in the debates over welfare reform, the question of work requirements for recipients of basic income is a central one.

In one sense, the debate over work requirements for basic income in the United States might seem to be settled. The Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) approximates a modest conditional basic income for families with children—no more than $4,204 for families with at least two children, with up to another $1,000 per child under the Child Tax Credit.[1] 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 aims to reward the work effort of low-income workers, to boost their wages without economically distorting wage subsidies, and to make even low-income work more attractive than welfare benefits. The EITC is a favored policy of American welfare theorists who argue that employment must be the foundation of a multi-pronged attack on the problem of poverty, even if low-wage jobs cannot by themselves lift the poor out of poverty. David Ellwood (1988), whose slogan is "making work pay," is the exemplar of this approach, but he is not alone. And though it is not characterized as a basic income, the EITC is a conditional cash grant that modestly achieves *some* of a basic income's goals.

If this is the case, should basic income advocates concede the matter, drop the push for unconditionality, and settle instead for a conditional basic income—in effect, an expanded EITC with some administrative modifications to increase take-up, and with funding at a higher level? Perhaps, but it is premature to concede the conditionality issue just yet. What basic income advocates have yet to do is present a positive account of a non-work-centered notion of liberal citizenship that surpasses the work-centered notion currently dominant in the United States. And while it is the debate in the United States that has the most to gain from this effort, it has implications for western Europe as well, where the more advanced debate over basic income is increasingly dominated by those who advocate a basic income conditional on a social contribution or participation requirement, in effect a weak work requirement that, while more liberal than a strict work requirement in intention, suffers from the same inegalitarian effects of selectivity.

In this chapter, I examine arguments for work-conditioned welfare and basic income. I focus on arguments for work requirements that extend beyond the terms of the traditional welfare debate, where work requirements can be seen as the price the poor pay for benefits redistributed from the middle class and the wealthy, because the scope of an unconditional basic income extends beyond the poor and must be justified in a manner that goes beyond alleviating poverty. Therefore, I review and critique arguments about work and participation requirements which advance a definition of citizenship. A review of arguments for conditionality and the theories of citizenship they posit shows what advocates of unconditionality have yet to do in making the case for basic income. Arguments from distributive justice, the kind that dominate the basic income debate (e.g., Van Parijs 1995), go only so far in making the case for an unconditional basic income; and a compelling and persuasive account of the kind of society and citizenship to which it leads is necessary for the justification to be complete. To address this omission, I offer as a liberal alternative a radically pluralist notion of citizenship with a kind of universal economic suffrage, made possible by an unconditional basic income, at its core. This proposal may not sway those who do not share the inclination toward a liberal, indeed a libertarian, foundation for society and social policy, but the analogy I posit between the political and economic spheres should, at the least, challenge supporters of work requirements to address the inequities in their own conceptions of citizenship that underlie and justify their calls for work requirements.

In what follows, I argue that the most common citizenship-based justifications for work requirements—the paternalistic and civic republican arguments—are flawed because of their selectivity, and that the only defensible citizenship-based justification for work requirements is the socialist model, which applies universally to all. Therefore, the choice for basic income advocates is not between conditionality and universality, but between the two starkly different forms of universality embodied in the socialist and liberal alternatives.

Citizenship and Work Requirements

The citizenship-based arguments for work-conditioned welfare and basic income fall into three categories that can be summarized as follows. The paternalistic argument sees work as the solution to the "pathology" of poverty—a deficit that inheres in the character of the poor themselves, the social and economic climate in which they are mired, or the structure of the welfare system (e.g., Mead 1986, 1992; Wilson 1987, and Murray 1984, respectively). Whatever the locus of the "pathology," advocates of this view regard paid work as the means for the poor to achieve the "independence" that welfare "dependency" precludes and that is necessary for full citizenship in contemporary society. The civic republican argument also sees paid work as the path to full integration into society, but its advocates emphasize the ideal of reciprocity as the basis for conditioning income benefits on paid work. In their view, full citizenship requires not independence, but participation in a web of mutual dependence. Some may require supplemental assistance, but beneficiaries are seen to be doing their part toward contributing to society's (paid) work (e.g., Gutmann and Thompson 1996, Kaus 1992, and White 1997). Finally, the socialist model posits citizenship based on each taking part in society's paid, public work as well as having access to whatever benefits they need. In this model, both benefits and obligations are universal and not, as in the first two models, distributed according to economic class or status (e.g., Gorz 1992, 1986, 1994b, 1989). I examine each of these arguments for work-conditioned benefits in turn.

The Paternalistic Argument for Work Requirements

The paternalistic view of welfare and entitlements for the poor dominates the debates about welfare in the United States and is embodied in current American welfare policy. It is characterized by its belief in the power of paid work to address what it views as the "pathology" of poverty. Its different strains vary as to whether they locate that "pathology" in the character of the poor; their environment; or in the system of benefits, incentives, and disincentives of the pre-PRWORA welfare system; but they share an emphasis on paid work as the way to address it.

In the United States, Lawrence Mead is the strongest advocate for conditioning welfare benefits on work, and one of those who advances an explicitly work-centered notion of citizenship. Mead argues that the entitlement theory of

citizenship—the one he claims was embedded in the pre-PRWORA welfare system—is harmful to the poor and to the greater society. Without the discipline imposed by social obligations, he says, the poor cannot exercise the self-government that is the foundation of freedom (1986: 88–89). The social obligation that concerns Mead most is the obligation to work, at least in return for monetary benefits like welfare payments. Mead focuses his attention on work for three reasons. First, he believes steady work to be the best reliable means of escaping dependence on the government for subsistence, if not for escaping poverty itself (1992: 60). Second, he argues that sufficient work is available for the unskilled unemployed, who are able to reject undesirable low-wage jobs when benefits are not contingent on their acceptance (1986: 70–76, 1992: 12). Third, he believes that there is a national interest in enforcing low-wage work (1986: 153–154).

Mead refers to work as a means to "integration" of the poor, and he means it in both a racial and a social sense. Mead suggests that the poor, especially poor blacks, have different values from the mainstream of American society. Enforced work requirements achieve physical integration by bringing poor blacks into contact with the working (white) majority, and cultural integration by enforcing dominant values (1986: 254–256). Mead's views on work requirements are filtered by his understanding of the ends of democratic government. While we privilege freedom in our political culture, he says, true freedom requires an underlying order and the government's willingness to be authoritative rather than permissive where necessary; social policy is one means of achieving this order (1986: 6–7). Mead argues that a consensus around a "new paternalism" has emerged, and the American government no longer shies away from imposing paternalistic programs on welfare recipients, teenage mothers, drug abusers, the homeless, and other social "outsiders," nor from the need to inculcate among its citizens the values that used to be fostered by the family (1997, 1998, 1992: 181–184).

While Mead's policy recommendations target poor and disadvantaged members of society, his political theory has a broader focus and purpose. His vision of democratic society as a unified, homogeneous, and disciplined citizenry working toward a common set of goals chosen, or at least ratified by, the majority puts him firmly in the conservative tradition of paternalism. His commitment to the integration of the mostly minority poor into mainstream society is bounded by his unwillingness to address the structural explanations for contemporary poverty in America, including racism, gender inequality, or the organization of the economy, or indeed to contemplate a genuinely pluralist vision of American society. What he advocates is a paternalistic integration, rather than an egalitarian one, with equal respect earned only by those who prove themselves through hard work and obedience to dominant norms.

The paternalistic argument depends in large part on the idea of economic "independence." Mead endorses continued economic "dependence" on government benefits for those who work but are still poor, calling into question the value of the independence ostensibly conferred by paid employment (1992: 60). Furthermore, economic independence can be achieved through one's own efforts, the efforts of a spouse or partner, or the efforts of a forebear or other benefactor. Because this

independence can derive from gifts or inheritance, it bears no necessary relation to the character of the individual. In the case of marriage, this "independence" relies on the *dependence* of one spouse or partner on the other, shifting the locus of independence from the individual to the household, and the object of dependence from the community to an individual partner.

Nancy Fraser and Linda Gordon, in their article "A Genealogy of 'Dependency'" (1997), trace the shifting connotations of the term from its description of the normal state of most of the pre-industrial population, through the revolutionary valorization of independence and its adoption by wage earners to distinguish themselves from dependent slaves, paupers, and women despite their own economic dependence on employers, to the rise of its current pejorative sense as an individual pathology rather than a structural social condition. Fraser and Gordon argue that:

> unreflective uses of this keyword serve to enshrine certain interpretations of social life as authoritative and to delegitimate or obscure others, generally to the advantage of dominant groups in society and to the disadvantage of subordinate ones (1997: 123).

This is clearly the case in the arguments of paternalists like Mead who, forced to acknowledge that even full-time work cannot guarantee a level of economic independence sufficient to obviate supplementation from the state, claims that some residual dependency on welfare benefits is allowed for those who play by society's rules by working for below-subsistence wages. But how can we endorse economic independence as an essential quality of citizenship if it remains out of the reach, not only of those who choose not to work or are unable to work, but of some who work full-time? Work requirements for the poor do not lead to a genuine independence, but only to a form of ideologized independence that obscures their structural subordination in the contemporary economy.

Furthermore paternalism, by valorizing the ideologized independence of the wage earner, gives insufficient consideration not only to alternative lifestyles that fall outside of society's dominant norms, but to important ways of life that fall within them. It is not only the poor single parent, deemed deviant from the norm by the lack of a partner, who suffers in comparison to the "independent" wage earner, but also the married parent who withdraws from paid employment to care for children and depends economically on her or his spouse. The caregiving spouse's "independence" is even more tenuous than the wage earner's, and is dependent on both the wage earner's employer and the wage earner's affections (see Moller Okin 1989: 134–169). The paternalist model fails to address adequately either of these important dependencies or to reconcile them to the ideal of independence it seeks to advance.

The Civic Republican Argument for Work Requirements

The civic republican argument for work requirements is more egalitarian than the paternalistic argument, and less overtly class based. Its advocates also value

adherence to shared norms, especially to the ideal of reciprocity. But they recognize the limits of work-based "independence" and characterize the ideal social condition instead as one of mutual dependence.

Two advocates of this view, Amy Gutmann and Dennis Thompson, reject the paternalistic rhetoric of dependency and advocate selective work requirements for welfare beneficiaries on the basis of the ideal of reciprocity (1996). They argue that income supports are made possible by those who participate in productive economic activity, and therefore that it is wrong for beneficiaries to refuse to participate in the "scheme of fair social cooperation" that makes such supports possible (1996: 279–280). Societies which provide income supports "cannot be neutral between ways of life that contribute to economic productivity and those that do not" (1996: 280). But reciprocity requires also that society provide some of the conditions necessary to make work a possibility for the poor. "Fair workfare," as Gutmann and Thompson term it, requires government action similar to that advocated by David Ellwood: "making work pay" through an expanded EITC, a system of enforcement and government guarantee of child support, and full employment policies (1996: 294).

> The obligations of welfare should be mutual: citizens who need income support are obligated to work, but only if their fellow citizens fulfill their obligation to enact public policies that provide adequate employment and child support (1996: 276).

Like Mead, Gutmann and Thompson believe work to be one of the foundations of citizenship, a "necessary condition to social dignity" (1996: 293), although they are ambiguous about whether that work must be paid employment outside the home.[2] 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 (1996: 280).

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

Both the paternalistic and civic republican arguments for work-conditioned welfare benefits attempt to justify selective work requirements in return for welfare benefits in order to support and advance dominant social norms, while conceding that these norms are not universally adhered to, nor can they be universally enforced. By focusing on poverty, its advocates are able to endorse work as a solution to the problem of poverty without affecting the lifestyle choices of more affluent citizens or the underlying inequalities of a system that allows some to choose work or leisure and others to have no choice.

The civic republican argument for selective work requirements is more attractive than the paternalistic argument because the ideal of reciprocity seems to

treat all citizens as worthy of respect and care, and it avoids the illusion of an ideologized independence in favor of recognizing our mutual dependence across society. But reciprocity is too general a principle to specify particular obligations like paid employment in return for welfare benefits. It falls victim to two criticisms in particular. First, those who do unpaid work in the home or in the community certainly participate in the scheme of social cooperation and contribute to society's prosperity, whether the contributors are part of a household with a paid worker or not. And second, all members of society receive benefits from that membership; it is unclear why work requirements should be restricted to recipients of one particular kind of benefit only.

The first objection can be answered by the substitution of participation requirements for work requirements. Advocates of participation requirements want to recognize the contributions to society made by some of those who choose not to work. Thus, they endorse the notion of enforcing, or at least promoting, reciprocity for society's benefits, but wish to expand the range of activities that count towards a social contribution beyond paid employment.

Anthony Atkinson, a British economist, proposes abandoning welfare programs in favor of a *participation income*, a basic income conditional on a "social contribution" broadly defined to include caregiving, studying, volunteer work, and looking for work; working in paid or self-employment; or being excused due to illness, disability, or reaching retirement age (1995b, 1998, 1995a: 302–303). Atkinson views the participation income as a compromise between basic income and means-tested benefits because he believes that an unconditional basic income is politically unfeasible. He sees the conditionality of the participation income as much less objectionable than welfare means testing because the definition of participation is so broad that most would qualify, and the positive connotation of qualifying for benefits would encourage all to seek them, as is not currently the case for Britain's welfare programs, which do not reach all who qualify (1996: 94, 1998: 146).

Advocates of participation requirements succeed in resolving one objection to the civic republican model by expanding the definition of social contribution to include forms of socially useful activities other than paid employment. But they fail to resolve the second objection, the problem of selectivity. All members of contemporary society with earned or unearned (e.g., interest) income receive monetary benefits in the form of tax credits and exemptions for certain kinds of income or expenses. If the recipients of welfare must work to reciprocate for their monetary benefits, why not the recipients of other tax system benefits, like the mortgage interest deduction, which can benefit those with only interest income, or Social Security spousal benefits, which benefit households where only one spouse works, or those who send their children to public schools? Individuals who are able to claim such benefits without having earned income might give them up before submitting to a work or participation 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 or participation test. If reciprocity is the guiding principle, why should the work test be reserved for only one class of beneficiaries?

The Socialist Argument for Work Requirements

The socialist model answers that work in the public sphere is a *universal* obligation of all citizens, and income supports a *universal* right. One version of this argument can be found in the work of André Gorz in the 1980s and 1990s.[3]

Gorz argues that the increasing mechanization of many forms of production, the consequent substitution of capital for labor in the manufacturing sector, and the growth of the service sector would lead to two potential divisions taking hold in society. The first is the division of society into those who work and those who do not (or who do not work outside the home) but are supported by welfare payments financed by those who work. The second is the division between those who have "good" jobs that are productive, stimulating, and located in the public sphere; and those who have "bad" jobs—jobs that provide personal services for those who can afford them and who no longer have the time to perform them themselves, such as child care and housecleaning, and that are located primarily in the private sphere (1992, 1986, 1994b: 44–52, 1989: 153–157). Gorz terms these divisions the "South Africanization" of the economy, referring to the old apartheid economy's division of society into a small group of well-paid workers and professionals, and a large group of poorly paid servants and low-skilled workers (1989: 156). Gorz also notes that the extension of equal opportunity to women intensifies this division, allowing a minority of women to participate in the professional economy while domestic work is further shifted to low-paid service workers (1986: 7).

Here Gorz differs markedly from most American welfare theorists, who argue that any kind of employment carries dignity and admits the individual into the sphere of independent citizenship. Gorz rejects this idea unequivocally, arguing that only productive work in society, as opposed to reproductive work, which traditionally has taken place in the private sphere, engenders "independence"—that is, liberation from personal dependence (1992: 181–182, 1989: 13–15, 206, 1994b: 34–35, 48–50; see also 1994a, 1985). To decrease unemployment without increasing the number of service workers and to insure a livable wage for all members of society, Gorz proposes job sharing through a reduction in working hours, together with a citizen's income to supplement the reduction in earned income.

Gorz (1994b) holds that a program of job sharing and a citizen's income is economically feasible. But he also believes it is the only welfare reform program consistent with the full dignity and citizenship of all members of society. With paternalists and civic republicans, he argues that "public citizenship" entails an obligation to contribute to society in addition to a right to benefit from its fruits (1992: 179–180, 1989: 205). But he sees the private sphere, in which individuals take care of themselves and their loved ones, as falling outside the sphere of work. As a result, Gorz opposes the increasing "outsourcing" of caregiving, entertainment, education of young children, and other formerly private activities, and does not consider jobs in these areas to be consistent with public, or social citizenship (1986: 9–11; see also 1994b: 169). Gorz is concerned not only with reshaping the welfare state, but with using its reform as a foundation for reshaping the

structure of social and economic life to advance individual freedom and as an ideal of social citizenship. In contrast to those in the paternalistic and civic republican traditions, Gorz, as a socialist, is prepared to enforce public work requirements on *all* citizens.

Gorz makes a persuasive case for liberating many low-skilled and unpaid service and domestic workers from what are often socially isolating positions without much chance of advancement, and for giving each citizen the opportunity to feel the kind of pride that only earning a paycheck can bring. But like the paternalistic and civic republican advocates of work requirements, he imposes on all citizens a uniform view of what activities are valued and rewarding, rather than letting individuals choose for themselves. Universal work requirements are fair in the sense of being egalitarian, but this is not a liberal solution.

Those who argue for participation requirements, like Atkinson, paint a more attractive picture of recognition for currently unpaid social contributions without requiring the state to get involved in job creation and allocation, and without wading into the morass of trying to compensate caregiving and other voluntary activities directly. Universal participation requirements redeem the inegalitarian civic republicanism of reciprocity advocates by infusing it with an ethic of egalitarianism and respect for the various contributions of a diverse citizenry. Both on economic and personal grounds, the flexibility of a broader definition of social contribution is more attractive, especially in the American context, than a socialist economy with mandated job sharing. Nevertheless, both the socialist model of universal work requirements and the egalitarian model of universal participation requirements are defensible positions to hold, and each articulates a theory of citizenship that has merit. Should advocates of basic income then concede the issue of unconditionality and advocate a basic income conditioned on universal participation requirements?

The Liberal Alternative of Radical Pluralism

Supporters of an unconditional basic income should not give in just yet. There is an alternative to the socialist and civic republican (however egalitarian) ideals that is inherent in American political and economic culture, but it requires reframing the debate over conditionality and overcoming leftist distaste for the institution of the market.

The first step is to break the hold of poverty and welfare analysts on the debate on conditionality, despite the fact that no American who advocates for basic income can do so without keeping the poor in mind. The motivating impulse behind the work of basic income advocates is in large part the elimination of the poverty that persists in the richest societies in the world. As Philippe Van Parijs notes, the institution of basic income can be seen as the culmination of the welfare state, necessitated by the recognition of the limits of all previous safety net structures (1992a: 465–466). But an *unconditional* basic income is not an incremental

change in welfare policy; it is a revolutionary change in our understanding of democratic citizenship.

> The introduction of a basic income is not just a feasible structural improvement in the functioning of the welfare state; it is a profound reform that belongs in the same league as the abolition of slavery or the introduction of universal suffrage (Van Parijs 1992b: 7).

If the "real libertarian" entitlement argument that Van Parijs advances is correct, surfers are no less deserving of a basic income than double-shift parents, since we are under no moral obligation to use what is legitimately ours in any socially approved manner. But the *radical pluralism* implied by this view requires additional justification if it is to survive the critique of those who claim that work or participation requirements are an essential element of citizenship. Assuming a basic income could be instituted in the United States, why not make it conditional on work or participation requirements?

American society offers two institutions as examples of radical pluralism to which we can appeal for a more liberal vision of what an unconditional basic income could accomplish: 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 favored form of welfare benefit of many economists of varying political stripes, including Milton Friedman and James Tobin in the United States, among others. Many 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 Hayek, the most passionate defender of laissez-faire economics, wrote positively about redistributive measures that do not interfere with the market's allocative function (1979: 54–56).

But market considerations 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 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—that is, outcomes more closely matched to individual preferences—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. 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 is no way to do so completely, at least without fatally disrupting the workings of the market and severely limiting the scope of individual freedom, but basic income can be seen as a partial solution. It need not (re)create a completely egalitarian distribution to have significantly egalitarian—and democratic—effects, providing each individual with renewable resources to save, consume, or invest as he or she sees fit. Basic income maintains 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—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, and because economic autonomy requires a more even balance of power between employers and employees than would be fostered by enforced work. Under this approach, basic income provides some compensation for the unpaid caregiving and voluntary activities envisioned in the participation requirement advocated by Atkinson 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. Most importantly, an unconditional basic income allows each citizen to have a role in shaping social mores as well as to pursue individual goals, helping to determine what we view as the "normal" balance of paid work, unpaid caregiving, and leisure, and the appropriate division of labor between the sexes. In this way, an unconditional basic income is not a prioritization of the individual good over the common good, but an alternative approach to achieving the common good that values the contributions and life choices of all individuals, including the poor and those who do not conform to dominant mores.

Conclusion

What I have presented here is only the framework of the case for a radically pluralistic notion of citizenship, to counter the paternalistic, civic republican, and socialist notions that currently dominate the basic income debate. What paternalism, civic republicanism, and socialism share is a willingness to impose constraints on the liberty of individuals in order to achieve patterned outcomes. This conflicts

with the libertarian ethos, which so clearly underlies the American economic and political spheres (and to a degree its social sphere as well). 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. But pairing a libertarian economic sphere with a paternalistic social sphere seems like the worst of both worlds. Liberal supporters of basic income must offer an attractive alternative vision of a pluralistic society in which all citizens have a guaranteed and unalienable minimum of economic, as well as political, autonomy to make an unconditional basic income a political possibility in the United States.

Notes

[1] The EITC is available to low-income workers without children, but at such a low level—a maximum of $382 for incomes up to $11,230 ($12,230 for married couples)—as to be considered trivial.

[2] 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 (Gutmann and Thompson 1996): 297–98, 293.

[3] Gorz occupies a distinct position in the debate on basic income and work requirements, as he argued vehemently *against* an unconditional basic income for many years, but now argues in favor of it. His long-held position advocated both a universal obligation to work and a basic income; that is, he supported both compelling employment outside the home and, to a certain extent, decoupling income and employment.

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