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## neo- -republicanismo

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# Republican global distributive justice

Frank Lovett  
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## Abstract

In recent years, a small but burgeoning literature has emerged addressing issues of global politics from a broadly civic republican point of view. However, the contributors to this literature have not yet seriously engaged with the extensive previously-existing work on global economic or distributive justice. This paper bridges the gap by presenting an account of global distributive justice in which the promotion of freedom from domination is taken to be our principle aim.

**Key Words:** Civic republicanism - Distributive justice - Domination - Freedom - Global justice - Liberal contractualism - Unconditional basic income.

## Resumo

Nos últimos anos, tem surgido uma literatura pequena mas crescente que lida com questões de política global do ponto de vista do republicanismo cívico. No entanto, aqueles que têm contribuído para esta literatura ainda não responderam seriamente à quantidade de investigação que tem sido produzida em torno da justiça económica ou distributiva global. Este artigo preenche esta lacuna, apresentando uma perspectiva acerca da justiça global segundo a qual a promoção da liberdade em relação à dominação é considerada o nosso principal objectivo.

**Palavras-chave:** Contratualismo liberal - Dominação - Justiça distributiva - Justiça global - Liberdade - Rendimento básico incondicional - Republicanismo cívico.

The republican tradition in political thought, with its emphasis on the importance and value of citizenship in bounded political communities, has often been criticized for its apparent indifference to global justice concerns. Recently, however, some authors have begun to address problems of global justice from a broadly civic republican point of view, most notably James Bohman (2004, 2007, 2009), Philip Pettit (2006, 2010), and Cécile Laborde (2010). While these developments are certainly welcome, relatively little attention in this literature has been so far given to the problem of global economic or distributive justice in particular.<sup>1</sup> Surely among the most striking features of the current global order are the staggering levels of socio-economic inequality and poverty around the world, and it would be disappointing, to say the least, if contemporary civic republicans had little of interest to say about these problems.

In this paper my aim will be to show that a contemporary civic republican political doctrine, suitably developed, does indeed have something of interest to say about global inequality and poverty. Roughly speaking, I will here understand civic republicanism as a political doctrine according to which we should aim to minimize, so far as we can, the extent to which persons or groups are subject to domination.<sup>2</sup> (This can be regarded merely as a more precise way of rendering the traditional republican tendency to hold liberty or freedom from domination as a paramount political value.) A conception of justice as minimizing domination, I will argue, provides compelling reasons for addressing the problems of global inequality and poverty and, moreover, reasons that are stronger in certain respects than those offered in the mainstream liberal-contractualist tradition. This is an interesting and surprising conclusion, since liberalism is usually regarded as the more cosmopolitan, and republicanism the more parochial, doctrine.

Civic republicans are above all concerned with freedom from domination. There are, of course, many accounts of what it means to be subject

1 A partial exception here is Laborde (2010: 51–53), and this paper should be read as an attempt to build on her initial efforts.

2 See Pettit (1997), Viroli (2002), Maynor (2003), and Lovett (2010), though the first three do not use the specific language of “justice as minimizing domination” that I favor.

to domination. On the particular view that I favor, we should say that persons or groups experience domination to the extent that they are dependent on social relationships in which some other person or group wields arbitrary power over them (see Wartenberg 1990; Pettit 1997; Lovett 2001, 2010). This can be called the *arbitrary power* conception of domination. It is terribly wrong for persons or groups to be subject to domination, so understood, when this can be avoided. Without rehearsing at length arguments that can be found elsewhere, I would suggest that this is because possessing some degree of freedom from domination is an important condition of human flourishing: when subject to domination, people are materially exploited, hindered by uncertainty from developing life plans, and deprived of self-respect.<sup>3</sup> Each of these claims is certainly worth further elaboration and support, but for the purposes of discussion we may set such a task aside. Instead, I will discuss the conception of justice most naturally implied by these broadly civic republican views, and especially how such a conception might address itself to issues of global justice in particular.

Justice, on a very old traditional view, is a virtue. On Aristotle’s extremely influential account, it is roughly the settled disposition to act justly and wish for what is just (2004: 112 = 1229a7–9). To put this thought in somewhat more contemporary language, let us say that people have various reasons for doing or not doing certain things. Some of these might be called obligations of prudence: at least on some occasions, if not often, we have reasons to promote our own interests. Not all obligations are self-regarding, however. Most believe that we also have at least some obligations to other persons, which might be called obligations of morality.<sup>4</sup> Justice clearly relates to the latter sort of reasons, but in what way? Very broadly, we might consider two different views. On the first, which can be described as a variety of *moral monism*, justice and morality are essentially the same. Thus many utilitarians, such as Peter Singer, believe that justice and morality should both be understood as maximizing the sum total happiness, counting the happiness of each individual person the same; essentially, justice and morality are two aspects of the

3 For further discussion, however, see Pettit (1997: 85–89), Laborde (2009: 152–156), or Lovett (2010: 130–134).

4 Most, though not all, of course. This existence of distinct moral obligations is denied by moral skepticism and mutual advantage theories of morality. I will ignore these views here.

same thing. Here I will only express, rather than fully defend, my own view that this is not the best way to think about justice. It seems to me at least possible for our obligations of justice to conflict with other moral obligations we might have. It is supposed to be a lesson in Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure*, for instance, that strict justice should sometimes be tempered with humanitarian mercy. This thought cannot be given coherent sense unless we suppose that we have (at least two) different sorts of potentially conflicting moral obligations. On this second view – which can be described as a variety of *moral pluralism* – justice is one distinct part of morality: among our multiple moral obligations are obligations of justice specifically, which may conflict with some of the others (such as either might with obligations of prudence).

If we adopt the latter view, it obviously becomes necessary to explain what distinguishes justice from the rest of morality. On this point, naturally, there are many different views. I will concentrate on the views implicit in the two contemporary political doctrines that are of the greatest interest to me in this discussion – namely, civic republicanism on the one hand, and liberal contractualism on the other. Both doctrines regard justice obligations as distinctly concerned with shared institutions and practices, and thus both can subscribe to the famous Rawlsian dictum that the “subject of justice is the basic structure” (Rawls 1971: 7). But they interpret this dictum in different ways, leading them to embrace rather different approaches to the problem of global justice. Or at any rate, so I shall argue.

## II

Suppose that, as civic republicans, we are most concerned with freedom from domination, for roughly the reasons suggested earlier. What sort of view about the nature of justice does this doctrine imply?

According to the standard civic republican accounts, the degree to which persons or groups experience domination is a function of the political and social institutions and practices that govern (or fail to govern) their relationships with other persons or groups. Suppose that Andrea is considerably stronger than Bob, and that Bob depends on Andrea for protection. In the absence of any institutions or practices otherwise effectively governing their relationship, we would say that

Bob is subject to domination insofar as Andrea is in a position to wield arbitrary power over him. Alternatively, suppose that Andrea and Bob are married in a patriarchal society governed by institutions and practices that foreclose opportunities to women outside of marriage, and simultaneously grant husbands considerable discretion in the treatment of their wives. In this case, we would say that Andrea is subject to domination insofar as Bob is in a position to wield arbitrary power over her. Given that human beings will always be to some extent dependent on one another, the only way to secure some measure of freedom from domination is to establish institutions and practices specifically designed to enhance opportunities, reduce imbalances of power, and constrain arbitrariness with effective rules and procedures. In the classical republican tradition, this line of thinking was summed up in the ideal of a community of citizens governed by shared laws, in which no one citizen was subject to the personal mastery of any other – an “empire of laws and not of men,” in the famous expression of James Harrington (1992: 8).

This civic republican view of things naturally suggests a particular way of understanding justice in general, and global justice in particular. If our foremost political aim is to reduce domination, and if levels of domination are largely a function of the political and social institutions and practices governing human relations, then it is perfectly natural to say (on this view) that the most just configuration of institutions and practices is the one among the set of feasible alternatives that in expectation would minimize the sum total domination experienced, counting the domination of each individual person exactly the same (or, equivalently, that feasible alternative configurations can be ranked from most to least just according to levels of sum total domination they would tend to generate).<sup>5</sup> Justice is here understood as being *about* institutions and practices specifically: our obligations of justice are obligations to support and maintain just institutions and practices so far as they exist (to act justly), and to strive to bring about just institutions and practices so far as they are absent (to wish for what is just).<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Note that with changes in knowledge, technology, resource availability, and so forth, the set of feasible configurations might change and, accordingly, the most just configuration in that set.

<sup>6</sup> This particular view about the distinctiveness of justice is not *exclusive* to civic republicans, of course. Pogge (1992) and Julia (2003), for example, connect justice to institutions in a similar way. Note that on their view, however, the *existence* of an institutional relationship generates obligations of justice, whereas on the view I have described, the *possibility* of an institutional relationship does.

So understood, justice obligations can obviously conflict with other moral obligations we might have, as they can with our prudential obligations. If I can materially contribute to the establishment of a domination-reducing institution only by deceiving certain people, for example, my justice obligations may be in conflict with my moral obligations; if I can do so only at some risk to my personal safety, my justice obligations may be in conflict with my prudential obligations; and so on. Deciding how to weigh such conflicting obligations is obviously a very complicated issue, well beyond the scope of discussion here. Our focus will be simply on justice obligations, considered as such.

Now there are many multi-layered and interconnected ways in which human beings are related to one another on local, societal, and global levels, and accordingly there are a multitude of actual and possible institutions and practices governing those complex relationships. Sometimes it is useful to distinguish between those networks of institutions and practices that operate primarily at a societal level on the one hand, and those that operate primarily at an inter-societal or global level on the other. As an example of the former, we might consider the institutions and practices constituting a political system, or those defining the shape of family relations; as an example of the latter, we might consider the institutions and practices governing (or failing to govern) the conduct of interstate conflict and warfare. In order to match this discussion up with terms already familiar to contemporary political theorists and philosophers, let us call the first network the *basic structure* of a society, and the second the *global basic structure*.

It is important to stress, however, that our suggested distinction between the basic structure of a society and the global basic structure can only be a rough approximation: never has it been the case that these two networks of institutions and practices were perfectly distinct. For example, domestic institutions governing immigration and emigration clearly can have inter-societal effects, and conversely inter-societal institutions governing the recognition of sovereignty clearly can have domestic effects. Just how useful an approximation it is at present may depend on the extent and scope of globalization, a controversial topic in its own right. Supposing that it is at least sometimes a useful distinction, however, it is easy enough to give a rough-and-ready characterization of social and global justice respectively: a theory of social justice is an account of the most just

basic structure for a given society, whereas a theory of global justice is an account of the most just global basic structure. Social justice and global justice supply the referents for our justice obligations. More precisely, the duty of social justice is the obligation of domestic political actors (citizens, political parties, interest groups, etc.) to bring about, maintain, and respect a just basic structure for their society, whereas the duty of global justice is the obligation of inter-societal political actors (states, international aid organizations, etc., and to some extent individuals themselves) to bring about, maintain, and respect a just global basic structure.<sup>7</sup>

However useful this distinction between social and global justice happens to be at any particular historical juncture, it is important to stress that on the civic republican view of things it is a pragmatic distinction only. Civic republicans are concerned above all with freedom from domination, on the grounds that domination presents a serious obstacle to human flourishing. In principle, the flourishing of all human beings should count exactly the same, and so it is strictly an instrumental question what configurations of institutions and practices, at home or abroad, happen to minimize domination. Of course it cannot be disputed that the classical republicans were often parochial in their outlook, but this was not an intrinsic feature of their political ideals. In this respect, civic republicans differ markedly from liberal contractualists, as I will next try to show.

### III

Liberal contractualism is a loose tradition in political thought encompassing such historical figures as John Locke, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and Immanuel Kant; and such political theorists and philosophers as John Rawls, Brian Barry, T. M. Scanlon, Thomas Nagel, and many others in our own day.<sup>8</sup> Liberal contractualists generally take two basic ideas as

7 Here I must leave aside the very interesting and complicated issue of the relevant agents of justice – on whom duty of justice falls, so to speak. Instead I will merely observe briefly that when it comes to global justice in particular, the relevant agents will most often have to be collective: as individuals, we usually have to delegate to states and other organizations our obligations to further global justice. This is consistent with believing that we nevertheless retain residual obligations to monitor the collective agents operating on our behalf, and push them in the right direction.

8 With some caveats, we might substitute the term “political liberalism” (as distinct from ethical or perfectionist liberalism on the one hand, and minimalist or modus vivendi liberalism on the other) for the term “liberal contractualism” here.

their point of departure, one descriptive and one normative. The first is the idea of reasonable pluralism – that is, the idea that most societies are characterized by an irreducible plurality of reasonable comprehensive doctrines. The second is the idea that, from a normative point of view, societies should be organized as fair systems of mutual cooperation. Working from these two basic ideas, liberal contractualists contend that just political and social institutions and practices are those that reasonable persons in a pluralistic society would regard as embodying a fair system of cooperation. Roughly speaking, each person agrees to reciprocally privatize the controversial aspects of his or her comprehensive doctrine so as to live together with others who do likewise under the auspices of an impartial system of institutions and practices.

Liberal contractualism is an extremely attractive political doctrine in many ways. For one thing, it is “political, not metaphysical,” as the slogan goes, because it does not appear to depend on the truth of any particular conception of the good or comprehensive doctrine. For another, it holds out the powerful vision of a perfectly voluntaristic society – that is, a society in which no one is forced to live under political and social institutions they do not accept as reasonable and fair. Thus, in Rousseau’s famous words, despite “uniting with all” in a single political community, each person “nevertheless obeys only himself and remains as free as before” (1987: 148). It is thus not surprising that it holds a dominant position in contemporary political theory and philosophy.

The liberal-contractualist political doctrine, much like the civic republican political doctrine discussed above, most naturally implies a particular view about the nature of our justice obligations. Fundamental to this approach, as I have said, is the idea of society as a system of cooperation. Rawls at one point expresses the idea as follows:

... a society is a more or less self-sufficient association of persons who in their relations to one another recognize certain rules of conduct as binding and who for the most part act in accordance with them. Suppose further that these rules specify a system of cooperation designed to advance the good of those taking part in it. Then, although a society is a cooperative venture for mutual advantage, it is typically marked by a conflict as well as by an identity of interests. (1971: 4)

The thought here is roughly that every society must have some method for distributing benefits and burdens of cooperation among its members

– for example, by coordinating their various activities and resolving their various disputes. The rules specifying a system of cooperation for some society are precisely its basic structure. Since different configurations of the basic structure will benefit different persons in different ways, we may ask which particular configuration would be the most fair, and that is precisely what a theory of social justice is supposed to tell us.

Thus, from a liberal-contractualist viewpoint, justice obligations are most naturally understood as a species of *associational obligations* – obligations we assume by virtue of our membership in an association. Suppose that Andrea and Bob are strangers. Despite being strangers, we would nevertheless assume that they must have some moral obligations with respect to one another: it would be wrong of Andrea, for example, to assault Bob so as to steal his clothes. Now suppose that Andrea and Bob decide to form a partnership in which they will coordinate their activities for mutual benefit. Having done this, we would probably assume that they must acquire some new special obligations in addition to the ones they had before. For example, perhaps it would be wrong of Andrea to conceal some part of the profits from their mutual efforts so she could appropriate them to her own use. Notice, however, that these new associational obligations are *agent-relative*: they are obligations Andrea owes to Bob specifically (and vice versa), but not to Carla, who did not join their partnership. It is also important to observe that although in this example we assumed the partnership was voluntary, this need not be a necessary condition of our having associational obligations. Indeed, when it comes to societies in our world, we are for the most part born to our particular society, and usually do not have the realistic option of choosing not to be a member.<sup>9</sup> Nevertheless, we derive benefits from that membership, and so it might plausibly be argued that we have special moral obligations to our fellow members.

From this point of view, it is natural to conceive of our justice obligations as precisely those associative obligations arising through our membership (whether voluntary or not) in a system of cooperation for mutual benefit. Insofar as that system of cooperation is constituted by its basic structure, we can again understand justice as being *about* insti-

<sup>9</sup> While it is true that some (though not most, probably) could emigrate and renounce their former citizenship, they must always join some other society. Membership in the society of your birth is *usually* involuntary, and membership in some society somewhere is *always* involuntary.



tutions and practices. In this respect, liberal contractualism and civic republicanism are similar. In contrast with utilitarianism, both offer pluralistic accounts of morality, and both relate the distinctiveness of our justice obligations specifically to the institutions and practices actually or potentially governing human relationships. The similarity extends no further, however. On the civic republican view, what matters from the point of view of justice is simply the success or failure of those institutions and practices in realizing freedom from domination. On the liberal contractualist view, what matters from the point of view of justice is rather the fairness or unfairness of the various cooperative associations constituted by those institutions and practices.

This difference is significant because on the latter view, unlike the former, it would appear that the distinction between social and global justice is a matter of principle, and not merely one of (more or less useful) practice. Considering domestic policies of immigration and emigration, for example, what matters to civic republicans are only the effects these policies might have on levels of domination: *whose* domination in particular does not matter. If some policy Andrea and Bob adopt for their partnership subjects Carla to domination, her not being a member of their partnership is no bar to her having a claim of justice against them. From the liberal contractualist point of view, however, membership does matter, since justice obligations arise only within associational relationships. Exactly why this should be – what it is about certain sorts of associations that gives rise to obligations of justice – is the subject of some debate. According to Rawls and his followers, the existence of some sufficient degree or density of mutual cooperation would seem to generate justice obligations (Rawls 1999; Freeman 2006); Blake (2001) and Nagel (2005) argue instead that justice obligations arise only in associations that coerce their own members; and Sangiovanni (2007) and Klosko (2009) point to the role that certain associations play in supplying critical public goods for their members. But these internal debates are less significant for our purposes than what all these authors share: namely, the view that justice is essentially a special sort of agent-relative, associational obligation.

If we regard justice as a species of associational obligation, then it is almost certain that we will regard social and global justice as fundamentally discontinuous. Whatever our view about the extent of globalization

and international cooperation, it is difficult to deny that our associational relationships with fellow society members are very different from our associational relationships (to the extent that they exist) with persons in other societies. It seems to follow, as all of the authors cited above have indeed concluded, either that we have no obligations of global justice at all, or (at best) that they are limited and different in character from our obligations of social justice.<sup>10</sup> The distinction between social and global justice is thus one of principle, and not merely one of (more or less) useful practice. In a surprising reversal of the usual view, we have found liberal contractualism the inherently more parochial, and civic republicanism the inherently more cosmopolitan, political doctrine.

#### IV

From a civic republican point of view, the most just global basic structure will be the particular configuration of inter-societal institutions and practices, among the set of feasible alternatives, that in expectation tends to minimize the sum total domination experienced, counting the domination of each individual person around the world exactly the same. Our first step in filling out this conception of global justice substantively is to think about the various ways in which inter-societal institutions and practices might influence the degree to which individuals around the world experience domination. Three broad areas of possible influence immediately come to mind. (These are meant to be examples, not an exhaustive list.)

First, we might expect the relative danger and instability of the security environment facing states to influence levels of domination. In lawless environments, more powerful states may dominate less powerful ones, and republics may have a difficult time surviving inter-state competition while preserving domestic freedom from domination (Deudney 2006). Civic republicans thus recommend designing global institutions and practices so as to reduce competition, restrain more powerful states, and encourage the peaceful resolution of inter-state conflict (Pettit

<sup>10</sup> Of course this conclusion is perfectly consistent with believing we may have other (non-justice) moral obligations that are global in scope – obligations of humanitarian charity, for instance. In some way or other, all of the cited authors are careful to point this out.

2010; Laborde 2010).<sup>11</sup> Second, a major source of domestic domination are autocratic governments. But clearly, the prevalence and persistence of autocratic governments around the world can be influenced by the design of the global basic structure: for example, the borrowing and resource privileges presently enjoyed by all sovereign governments may encourage local despots, and certainly help them maintain power (Pogge 2001, 2005). From a civic republican point of view, global institutions and practices should thus be designed so as to discourage autocracy as much as possible, and implement a democratic minimum instead (Bohman 2007, 2009).<sup>12</sup> For the purposes of our discussion here, however, I will mainly be interested in a third area of concern, which has so far received less attention in the civic republican literature – namely, economic or distributive justice. This is roughly the question of what justice recommends when it comes to the distribution of entitlements to socioeconomic goods and services such as income and wealth, education and training, medical and other sorts of care, and so forth (hereafter the “distribution of goods” for short).<sup>13</sup> As noted in the introduction, the staggering levels of inequality and poverty around the world are surely among the most striking features of the current global order, and thus it is important for civic republicans to engage with such issues.

Our first order of business is to think somewhat more carefully about the connection between socioeconomic inequality and poverty on the one hand, and domination on the other.<sup>14</sup> Now it is reasonably safe to assume that most people regard their freedom from domination as a particularly important good. (Why else would so many have struggled to free themselves from despotism, for example, even at considerable risk to themselves?) Nevertheless, freedom from domi-

<sup>11</sup> Assuming, of course, that some sort of world-state is not in the set of feasible global basic structures. Even if it is, however, there may be republican arguments against it – perhaps on the grounds that it would be less effective than smaller territorial states in reconciling the rule of law with freedom from domination. See also Pettit (2010: 80–82).

<sup>12</sup> It also follows that states have justice obligations to refrain from propping-up autocratic governments through military or economic support, though these may sometimes conflict with their prudential obligations. To what extent they also have justice obligations to intervene and topple autocratic governments is a complicated and controversial issue, well beyond the scope of discussion here.

<sup>13</sup> Note that, strictly speaking, it is always the distribution of entitlements to things, and not the things themselves, that is at issue; properly understood, this does not affect the main debates.

<sup>14</sup> See also the more detailed discussion in Lovett (2009: 822–825; 2010: 192–196).

nation is only one good among others. People also have what might be called *basic needs* – the need for an adequate level of nutrition and health, for minimal clothing and shelter, for an education sufficient to function in their community, and so on. In order to secure her basic needs, a person must have entitlements to the goods or services that doing so requires. If someone needs a life-saving bypass operation, for example, then she must have either the money to pay for it, or else an insurance plan that covers it, or else a publicly-funded entitlement to receive it, or else some other equivalent. Reasonable people do not typically regard failing to secure their basic needs as an option, and it follows that they might be willing to trade away some of their freedom from domination – highly valued as that may be – in order to do so. Among the innumerable instances of this world-wide, we might cite as representative the example of individuals who, in the desperate hope of providing for themselves and their families, seek employment as illegal or undocumented workers in wealthy societies, despite the fact that this means placing themselves under the arbitrary power of those who employ them.

The exact level at which reasonable people begin to trade away their freedom from domination in order to secure basic needs no doubt varies according to the time, place, and individual in question, of course. The minimum acceptable level of education, for instance, differs widely according to the culture and level of economic development in a given society. We will return to this point shortly. For the moment, what is important is the general fact that people may be willing to accept higher levels of domination rather than fail to secure their basic needs, and this remains true even if we regard exact content of basic needs as relative to circumstance. Civic republicans will thus have strong reasons for being concerned with severe inequality and poverty, wherever it might be found: the more inequality and poverty there is in the world, the more often people will find themselves compelled to subject themselves to domination in order to meet other basic needs. Given that freedom from domination is a necessary condition for complete human flourishing, justice demands that we do something about this.

What in particular does justice demand that we do? Various possibilities might be considered. Perhaps we might try to prohibit the relevant sorts of exchanges. On a global level especially, this would probably

be infeasible; even if it could be done, to prohibit such exchanges without addressing their underlying motivation is only to take the dismal choice scenarios faced by the economically desperate and make them worse. Perhaps instead we might aim to better regulate the relationships arising from such exchanges, restricting the arbitrary powers employers might wield over their employees, for example. Alas, this strategy also is unlikely to be of much help in the long run, given that it will always be possible to find ways to evade and manipulate the regulations. Our best strategy, therefore, is probably to attack the problem from the other end: if we want to discourage people from trading away their freedom from domination, the most reliable and least intrusive method is to ensure that their basic needs have been secured to begin with. Not having to subject themselves to domination in order to meet basic needs, few would presumably choose to do so, thus considerably reducing the aggregate domination experienced.

Having clarified the connection between socioeconomic inequality and poverty and domination, I will in the next and final section discuss what this suggests for a civic republican account of economic or distributive justice.

## V

It is obvious that configurations of political and social institutions and practices will have a considerable influence on the degree to which people find their basic needs met. Furthermore, since it is domestic institutions and practices that probably have the largest impact, securing basic needs will primarily be a matter of social justice. From this point of view, I have elsewhere argued that the optimal configuration of domestic institutions and practices would be a broadly free market economic system combined with an unconditional basic income set at the highest sustainable level (Lovett 2009: 825–828; 2010: 196–203). Roughly, the idea is that either an unconditional basic income or a scheme of means-tested welfare benefits might reduce the probability that individuals will find themselves compelled to subject themselves to domination in order to meet basic needs, but that the former has additional advantages in not itself introducing unnecessary dependency on the arbitrary discretion of public authorities. Thus an unconditional basic income will usually

be the more congenial option from a civic republican point of view.<sup>15</sup> Since our aim is to *minimize* domination so far as this is feasible, and since the greater the basic income grant the less likely it is that people will trade away their freedom from domination, justice requires that we set the grant at the highest sustainable level.

That said, it is almost certainly the case that inter-societal institutions and practices constituting the global basic structure also have some influence on inequality and poverty around the world. For example, the existing network of trade agreements and barriers, the composition of international development agencies such as the IMF and the World Bank, the autonomy of states to set their own immigration and foreign aid policies, the structure of global capital markets, and so forth, surely must have at least *some* impact on the ability of various societies around the world to secure basic needs for their members, even if the extent and nature of that influence is disputed.<sup>16</sup> From a civic republican point of view, we would want to favor whatever configuration of the global basic structure can be expected to best encourage and facilitate these efforts.

Before speculating as to what an optimally just configuration might be, it is worth reiterating here that the civic republican argument for being concerned with global inequality and poverty is very different in structure from the liberal contractualist one. The former does not depend, as the latter does, on the extent and nature of inter-societal relationships. This is fortunate: it is sometimes difficult for people to view themselves as engaged in a system of mutual cooperation *even with the members of their own society*, much less with the members of other distant societies. Civic republicanism does not tether justice to our associational obligations. Justice obligations, on the civic republican view, arise out of the universal importance of freedom from domination as a condition of human flourishing. This seems to me a significant strength of the doctrine.

Now, finally, what configurations of the global basic structure might best serve the aims of economic or distributive justice? Since this is largely a pragmatic question that experts in development economics are best positioned to address, the following remarks will be fairly general.

<sup>15</sup> This will not be true in all circumstances, of course. When faced with extreme poverty, for example, humanitarian considerations might assume priority, thus requiring more targeted approaches.

<sup>16</sup> Here see the debates in Pogge (2002; 2005), Risse (2005), and Hayward (2008). According to Risse, we are already at what is in effect the most just alternative in the feasible set of global basic structure configurations, but this seems to me unlikely.

One thought might be that if the argument for a domestic unconditional basic income is sound, then so too would be an argument for a global unconditional basic income. This conclusion is perhaps too hasty, however. Even supposing that a global unconditional basic income were feasible, for reasons alluded to above it would have to be significantly adjusted to accommodate for local circumstances. Our aim, recall, is to reduce the probability that people will subject themselves to domination in order to secure what they regard as basic needs, but clearly very different things can be regarded as basic needs in different circumstances. Basic income grants that are generous in some societies might be woefully inadequate in others. In order to roughly approximate the ideally necessary schedule of adjustments, then, we might charge each society with the responsibility for providing the most generous basic income it can for its own members.

This rough approximation will still be far from ideal, however. Different societies have vastly different capacities to provide for the basic needs of their own members. Societies may be disadvantaged by history (perhaps they suffered a period of colonial exploitation), poor natural resource endowments, an unfavorable geography, etc., and as a result they will be comparatively less able to supply a satisfactory level of basic income – even on a meaning of “satisfactory” suitably adjusted to relative circumstances. In order to minimize the sum total domination, counting the domination of each individual person exactly the same, it will thus be necessary for the relatively capable societies to assist the relatively incapable ones through foreign aid. How much should the former give? Justice demands that they increase aid levels until the marginal benefit of additional aid (in terms of reducing domination abroad) would be equal to the marginal benefit of increasing their domestic basic income grant (and thus reducing domination at home).

What *sort* of foreign aid is best is, of course, an issue for development economics. If, for example, the currently popular institutional theories are correct, then the most effective aid might be support in building political and social institutions so the aid-recipient societies might provide for the basic needs of their own members in the future. Speaking generally, however, it would be best from a civic republican perspective if the mechanisms for delivering foreign aid did not themselves introduce avoidable domination. Suppose for example that foreign aid were supplied unilat-

erally by relatively capable societies according to their particular whims. While this might do some good, it might also introduce relationships of inter-societal dependency. Thus it would perhaps be better if there were a set of global institutions specifically designed to collect and distribute foreign aid through public and non-arbitrary procedures. The details of such a system are unfortunately best discussed another time.

This paper offers only an initial sketch of a civic republican account of global economic or distributive justice, and even then many important issues are inevitably delegated to professional development economists. Nevertheless, it is important that we have the right aims and goals in view. Civic republicanism, I have argued, supplies clear and compelling reasons for being concerned with global inequality and poverty, and moreover suggests some specific principles that might guide our attempts to address it. In this respect, civic republicanism is a political doctrine worth endorsing.

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## A global republic to prevent global domination

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### Abstract

Most of students of the global order, including those who approach it from a republican perspective, have opposed the idea of a world state motivated by their fear of tyranny and potential domination. In contrast, this paper argues for the creation of a global republic composed by an authoritative institutional system constituted, as well as constrained, by a global constitution. As any other republic, its constitutional framework should establish the principles of separation of powers, checks and balances, and the rule of law, among others, in order to prevent the risk of becoming a powerful dominating agent. But such global republic must be authoritative enough to interfere and limit part of states' sovereignty. The paper compares this view with three other competing normative views of the global order: the statist multilateral one, the idea of a republican law of peoples, and the idea of a transnational deliberative democracy. The argument to prefer the creation of a global republic to these other alternatives is that it is better suited to prevent global domination, which is the main goal that a republican view of the global order needs to be committed to achieve.

**Keywords:** Cosmopolitanism – Democracy – Global Republic – Global Order – Non-Domination.

### Résumé

La plupart des chercheurs sur l'ordre mondial, y compris ceux qui l'étudient du point de vue républicain, se sont opposés à l'idée d'un État mondial motivés par