

Fundamentals of an Ecological Basic Income

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ABSTRACT The present article debates the fundamental points of an Ecological UBI proposal. First, a literature review on Ecological/Environmental Ethics is brought up. Green Republicanism also sets up a theoretical foundation for an Ecological UBI. Besides, post-productivism and degrowth goals are imperative for humankind to deal with the present ecological urgencies, as seen in the UBI theory that is also brought up. Based on this literature review, the article proposes fundamental points to an Ecological UBI: (i) the funding should come from the taxation of resource extraction (not only fuel extraction) and income/wealth concentration; (ii) the coordination of different public policies to decommodify fundamental needs; (iii) the sufficiency of the Basic Income payment for the individual to have their basic needs satisfied without the necessity to work; (iv) the stimulation of regional/circular economies. Ecologism does not make it unfeasible for short-term environmental measures, also relevant concerning green and fair transition.

KEYWORDS Unconditional Basic Income; ecology; environmentalism; socio-economic justice; green republicanism; post-productivism.

RESUMO O presente artigo debate os pontos fundamentais de um RBI Ecológico. Primeiramente, propõe-se uma revisão da literatura em Ética Ecológica/Ambiental. O Republicanismo Verde também estabelece uma base teórica ao RBI ecológico. Além disso, agendas de pós-productivismo e decrescimento são indispensáveis para a humanidade lidar com as atuais urgências ecológicas, como demonstrado na teoria do RBI aqui analisada. Com base nesse debate e na revisão da literatura, o artigo propõe pontos fundamentais para um RBI Ecológico: (i) financiamento originado da tributação da extração de recursos (não apenas da extração de combustíveis) e da concentração de renda/riqueza; (ii) coordenação de diferentes políticas públicas para desmercantilizar necessidades fundamentais; (iii) suficiência do Rendimento Básico para que o indivíduo tenha as suas necessidades básicas satisfeitas independentemente de trabalho; (iv) estímulo de economias regionais e circulares. Ecologismo não inviabiliza medidas ambientais de curto prazo, que são essenciais quando se trata de transições verdes e justas.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE Rendimento Básico Incondicional; ecologia; ambientalismo; justiça socioeconómica; republicanismo verde; pós-productivismo.

Introduction

The Unconditional Basic Income (hereinafter UBI) has been the subject of social, political, and economic discussions for hundreds of years (Van Parijs & Vanderborght, 2017). Scholars, however, have been paying increasing attention to the topic over the last few decades (Widerquist et al., 2013; Torry, 2019). Due to facts such as the COVID-19 pandemic, increasing unemployment, and growing automation (Standing, 2020), the UBI proposal has gained new strength in the context of global politics. The conjuncture thus urges for policies that can help build a healthier and less fragile society. A Basic Income for all would be a significant step towards it.

The definition of the term Unconditional Basic Income adopted in the present is “an income paid by a political community to all its members on an individual basis without means test or work requirement” (Van Parijs, 2004, p. 8). The fundamental aspects are thus the following: (i) unconditionality, (ii) individuality, (iii) universality, (iv) periodicity, and (v) paid in cash, which means it is a financial aid given periodically to every single person regardless of their economic situation.

Nonetheless, one of the main obstacles to the implementation of UBI is the lack of political support. Several politicians and scholars oppose the Basic Income proposition due to the “lack of political and economic feasibility” argument. UBI tests show that the implementation of Cash Transfer Policies should be encouraged and progressively developed (Standing, 2020; Merrill et al., 2019). Still, the debate on how to fund UBI schemes is imperative not only to make the proposal more feasible but also to aim for the best possible policy.

On another note, one central challenge to the current world that can (and should) be interconnected to the UBI debate is the matter of environmental urgency. The green transition to a more ecologically balanced society becomes more pressing as the years go by. In this sense, a UBI can aid a green and fair transition to a more ecologically just society.

Initially, the Basic Income idea was related to economic, social, and political justice, but it has been increasingly correlated with environmental matters in the XXI century (Pinto, 2020). Several authors defend that the UBI proposal can act symbiotically on both the socioeconomic and environmental fronts (Casassas & de Wispelaere, 2016; Pinto, 2020). While it is a policy that can promote redistributive justice, it can also

push for the post-productivist agenda by fomenting circular and greener economies.

Nevertheless, it is always pivotal to highlight that a UBI does not neglect the importance of other public policies that act in coordination in order to build a green Welfare State. Even though there are advocates that defend the UBI as an alternative that can substitute for Welfare public policies, the present paper argues for the symbiotic approach to the UBI and the Welfare State so as to satisfy the Ecological Basic Income proposal.

For the aforementioned reasons, the present article focuses on the fundamental points of an Ecological Basic Income. First, a literature review on Environmental Ethics and Green Republicanism is brought up. Subsequently, the UBI theory is addressed, and its most essential meeting points with Ecologism are pinpointed so that the final section discusses the fundamental aspects of an Ecological Basic Income proposal.

The definition of an Ecological BI is drawn from Dobson (2007) and Pinto (2020). The idea consists of a UBI proposition that stimulates the defiance of the capitalist society by moving towards a non-growth or even de-growth economy, profoundly transforming the relationship between humankind and nature. This model objectifies the decrease in consumerism and labor, advocating for post-productivism¹. Also, it opposes the idea of an Environmental BI, which focuses on adjusting society to achieve a more sustainable economy. As it turns out, no profound changes affect the social structures in this second alternative. In practical terms, this environmental path means, for example, green economy political agendas that encourage reliance on renewable fuel and sustainable growth.

In our current world, although some existing policies can be deemed as environmental² (Merrill et al., 2019), it is not possible to affirm that an Ecological Basic Income pilot or policy has ever been tested/implemented. Therefore, since the present work understands the Ecological

1 Productivism understands work (especially paid work) as a central pillar of society, and full employment as a political goal (Widerquist et al., 2013, p. 260). In this sense, post-productivism refers to a society or efforts that overcome the productivist logic, where paid labor is not central to the economy. Non-productivist activities, on the other hand, refer to occupations that are not measured in their contribution to the country's GDP, such as care or social volunteer work (Wilderquist et al, 2013).

2 One example of Environmental Basic Income is Maricá's Citizen Basic Income, for the combined efforts of Maricá's government to stimulate sustainable development in the city (Souza, 2022).

path as the most desirable one in comparison to the Environmental one, this paper aims to justify the Ecological choice and, subsequently, to understand the fundamental points of this kind of Basic Income proposal.

From a preliminary stance, the option of the present work to defend an Ecological UBI is justified by the understanding that the oppressive relationship between human society and non-human nature is undesirable since it is the basis for accumulation, competition, and oppression among humans. By defending circular sustainability³, the ecological path goes in opposition to the oppressive accumulation of natural resources perpetrated by humans. In other words, the ecological alternative for accumulation is a circular equilibrium of human and non-human actors, a reality in which resources are obtained in such circularity via a non-oppressive relationship. This argument is more thoroughly addressed in the first section of the paper.

An Ecological UBI needs to be in line with five fundamental points: (i) post-productivism and degrowth, (ii) socioeconomic justice, (iii) flora and fauna rights, (iv) regionalism and circular economies, (v) a wide range of public services that act in ecological and post-productivist stances. All of these points will be addressed in the first two sections of the present work. From such guiding aspects, it is possible to discuss a UBI structure that is in line with the Ecological theory, which is done in the final section of the paper.

It is worth highlighting that the purpose of this work is to encourage political and philosophical debate on the Ecological Basic Income idea. The debate, however, is not intended to lead to a detailed proposal for policy implementation; the construction of a theoretical framework of the Eco UBI is the main objective here.

1 Literature review on environmental ethics and green republicanism: The case for ecologism

As Merrill et al. (2019) recall, there are two different approaches when considering a Green Basic Income: the environmental and the ecological. Both are based on Dobson's (2007) definitions of environ-

3 In order to avoid semantic and academic imprecisions, the present work relates ecological sustainability to the concept of strong sustainability (Neumayer, 2003). Concepts of sustainability that fall into the productivist and anthropocentric perspectives are considered, for the present article, a kind of weak sustainability (Neumayer, 2003).

mentalism and ecologism. The first refers to a “managerial approach to environmental problems, secure in the belief that they can be solved without fundamental changes in present values or patterns of production and consumerism”; the latter is connected to “radical changes in our relationship with the non-human natural world, and our mode of social and political life”⁴ (Merrill et al., 2019, p. 229.).

The present article defends that the ecological path should be taken for one fundamental reason: environmentalism does not cease human oppression of nature; it only aims to make it sustainable. Accepting non-human actors as those entitled to fundamental rights is critical to solving the relationship between humans and their surrounding nature, and such a condition is only satisfied through the Ecological path. In order to support that argument, it is vital to highlight the environmental ethics debate regarding flora and fauna rights before proposing a new relationship between humans and nature.

Attfield (2018) recognizes the long history of the anthropocentric treatment of nature, in which the value of the environment was determined by how it affected, either positively or negatively, human society. Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring*, published in 1962, is considered one of the most significant research works that initiated a change in the way we perceive the environment. The book highlights the adverse effects of the uncontrolled use of pesticides in industries, which affect not only human health but also the entire ecosystem. Carson cites the discovery of DDT in Antarctic penguins, highlighting the negative impact of pesticides on wildlife. Another revolutionary moment in this field of study was in the 1970s when several authors (Naess, 1973; Rolston, 1975; Routley, 1973) affirmed the need for a new approach to environmental ethics. The main contribution of those debates was the acceptance of an inherent and intrinsic value in non-human beings independently from the anthropocentric perspective⁵.

4 Loosely translated by the author from the original Portuguese (Merrill et al., 2019). It is important to note that I take responsibility for all the translations in this article.

5 Routley's Last Man on Earth (1973) hypothesis reshaped the debate on environmental ethics; it proposed a post-apocalyptic scenario in which only one human individual, alongside other species, remains on Earth. The philosopher (Routley, 1973) discusses whether it would be morally wrong if this hypothetical human killed all life surrounding him/her before his/her death. After that, no human would be alive to deal with the consequences of their actions. That hypothesis was presented at the Bulgarian World Congress of Philosophy in 1973. Most of the participants of the lecture were against the last man's resolution since it would be wrong to kill any kind of life with no motive. By taking that stance, they were recognizing an inherent and intrinsic value in the lives of non-human beings, paving the way for a biocentric (and later ecocentric) perspective of environmental ethics in opposition to historical anthropocentrism.

More recently, the environmental ethics debate delved into more profound debates of the human-nature relationship. Academic papers have explored discussions regarding speciesism and animal liberation. Almiron & Tafalla (2019) list multiple views that advocate for animal liberationism and, thus, against speciesism. Some examples of these lines of study are utilitarianism (Singer, 1975, 1990), egalitarianism (Horta, 2016), rights theory (Regan, 1983), and virtue ethics (Rollin, 2016). Advocating for the principle of equal interest⁶ as an alternative to speciesist domination, all of those views agree that speciesism and its consequential oppressions are not justifiable. In this sense, also claiming essential changes in interspecies power relations, Almiron and Tafalla (2019) argue that the demand for animal liberation encompasses more than a denunciation of the negative consequences of modernity. The recognition of values and rights intrinsic to non-human beings is the central reason for facing oppressive interspecies relations.

In order to correct interspecies oppression, another perspective brought up by Almiron & Aranceta-Reboredo (2022) is the defense of compassion as a moral quality that should be expanded to all sentient beings. Almiron & Aranceta-Reboredo argue that Donovan's (2007) view on compassion reduces the supposed ontological distinctions between human and non-human animal perspectives. Even though compassion is understood as a part of the moral spectrum and traditionally considered minorly relevant in the history of philosophy and virtue for being an emotion (Puleo, 2011), it does not deny the Enlightenment's commitment to reason and reflection (Nussbaum, 1996). Donovan & Adams (2007) and Gruen (2014) argue that emotional and rational spectra should be both recognized in philosophy as fundamental human traits in moral experiences. This line of thought paves the way for interspecies compassion. It tackles the hierarchical evaluative thinking system that understands humans as opposite and superior to nonhumans (Velasco, 2017, as cited in Almiron & Aranceta-Reboredo, 2022).

Such environmental ethics reflections are central to the present paper in the recognition of flora and fauna's intrinsic value and rights. The understanding of non-human nature⁷ as actors that need to be seen

6 For this paper, "the principle of equal interest (...) states that the equal interests of different individuals count the same, regardless of the identity of these individuals (i.e., regardless of their species)" (Almiron and Tafalla, 2019, p. 10).

7 The term "non-human nature" refers to ecosystems, ecological niches, and socioecological systems service, encompass not just specific beings but also their interrelation that exist independently from human action (Siipi, 2008). This does not mean that non-human lives that depend on human lives should not be considered, but they are not being discussed

from a non-oppressive, realistic perspective lays the ground for an Ecological Basic Income. Nevertheless, it is still relevant to understand how such environmental debates are connected to Republicanism, one of the philosophical pillars of Basic Income (Pinto, 2020).

The concept of “Republicanism” is not necessarily associated with environmentalism or ecologism. Audier (2015) is one of the principal authors to address such normative debates from an environmental perspective, admitting that Republican ideals need to encompass the ecological dimension. Such arguments are justified and explained by the interdependency not only among human individuals but also human dependence on the sustainable environment. In case the human-nature relation collapses, human life collapses as well. However, these ecological assumptions are accompanied by the necessity to review a series of republican concepts, especially the debate concerning individual freedom and its limits.

Republican freedom commonly takes up two stances: positive and negative liberties. According to Berlin (2002), negative freedom refers to the liberty of external restraints; that is, an individual should be able to live without the constraints of external actors. On the other hand, the positive stance refers to the freedom to live according to one’s will and self-realization. However, in more recent years, republicans such as Phillip Pettit (1997) have been advocating for a third distinct stance: freedom as non-domination.

Pettit (1997) connects this type of republican freedom (of non-domination) to environmentalism by stating that any assault on the environment should be considered an attack on the human undominated choice and, thus, a constraint to Republican freedom (Pettit, 1997, p. 137). In other words, if liberal freedom opposes environmental sustainability, human undominated freedom is endangered since humans depend on a sustainable environment to exist and flourish. Such a perspective can be associated with Dobson’s (2007) concept of environmentalism, once Pettit (1997) does not defend nature as an independent actor in Republicanism; on the contrary, nature needs to be preserved due to anthropological reasons. In this sense, Pettit (1997) is concerned with making natural exploitation by humankind a sustainable activity.

On the other hand, some thinkers believe that Pettit’s approach (1997, 2012) encompassing sustainability as a republican necessity is

in the present article. The aim is to explore the relational perspective between human and non-human environments.

not enough to tackle the existing climate and environmental crisis. Cannavó (2016), for example, argues that more structural and fundamental changes are needed in society and that republicanism shares little cohesiveness with ecologism. Audier (2015) considers the productivist-ecologist dichotomy, defending that republican thinking needs to distance itself from productivism and the exploitation of nature. Freedom as non-domination would hence not only be extended to individuals but also to nature and non-human creatures, putting an end to the exploitation of nature to benefit humans and solidifying flora and fauna as democratic actors entitled to fundamental rights. Both authors (Audier, 2015; Cannavó, 2016) partially agree with Pettit (1997, 2012) but delve deeper into the understanding of nature as a republican actor entitled to non-domination freedom and reassert the interdependency between humans and nature. The thoughts concerning the recognition of fauna and flora rights and the interdependency between nature and humankind are in line with Dobson's (2007) ecologism. Such literature leads up to what Pinto (2020) calls Green Republicanism.

The oppression of ecological actors is, thus, (i) immoral - after all, besides the possibility of avoiding such oppression, one cannot ignore the inherent value in the lives of non-humans and (ii) unsustainable - humanity still has not found a way to dominate nature in a sustainable manner. The "immorality" argument is enough for ecologism once it views the competition for natural resources among humans as the leading cause of both socioeconomic and environmental kinds of oppression (Bookchin, 2005). Therefore, even if humans were to find a way to exploit nature in a sustainable matter, the anthropological oppression of nature would still lead to negative consequences, e.g., the unnecessary accumulation of resources and the competition for even more considerable accumulation among humans. This conjuncture is thus likely to lead to an oppressive human society.

In this sense, socialist/Marxist views that understand nature as merely extractive resources for the sake of human flourishing⁸ are invalidated by both the argument of immorality and the practical argument of unsustainability⁹. Such a political spectrum is contrary to post-pro-

8 It is relevant to note that there are Marxist and Socialist views that distance themselves from productivism, such as Social Ecology (Bookchin, 2005).

9 On this note, it is interesting to compare the environmental ethics debate in communist and capitalist countries, especially during the Cold War. Environmental unsustainability was an unsolved issue in both ideological spectra.

ductivist ideals. Agendas that argue for the de-commodification and preservation of nature are imperative to the ecological perspective.

Nature¹⁰ is one essential pillar of human flourishing. Since it is the source of all material needs¹¹, nature, as a result, allows abstract resources to be achieved. In this sense, by establishing and reinforcing a dominating relationship with nature, human society enables an oppressive conjuncture. Anthropological oppression of nature leads to competition toward access to basic goods and the accumulation of resources. In the present society, this competition is played out through the unequal power of consumerism, which is the fundamental way through which socioeconomic oppression is carried out.

When it comes to access to natural resources and fundamental human rights, the irresponsible use of nature by humans leads to environmental abuse and an attack against both human and non-human freedom (Pinto, 2020). Understanding ecological actors as entitled to rights is critical to building an interconnected and symbiotic ecosystem.

Both environmental and socioeconomic dominations are reciprocally built and reinforced (Bookchin, 1990). Therefore, when criticizing such forms of domination, the desired changes advocate for a society in which humans do not oppress natural actors, and there is no competition among the latter toward natural resources.

In the advocated ecological path, both natural actors and human actors are understood as equal owners of rights and not as social commodities. This is the Green Republican ideal conjuncture, as debated by Pinto (2020). Such an alternative does not mean that all humans will be entitled to the same amount of resources or that there will not be any competition at all among individuals. It means that neither human nor non-human actors will suffer from domination, which allows individual, social, and ecological flourishing in a non-dominative reality. Such ideals are in line with the Green Republican theory by Cannavó (2016), Audier (2015), and Pinto (2020). In fact, such a hypothetical inequality among humans does not conceive the idea of domination once every individual and every environmental actor have their fundamental rights, including republican freedom, secured. However, it is vital to keep in mind that

10 Nature, in this case, refers to the opposition to artificial, e.g., natural means everything that exists and is not significantly affected by human action (Attfield, 2018, p. 41).

11 It is important to qualify those resources as material because there are abstract resources that are also essential to human flourishing, such as conviviality and freedom of expression, which are not materially found in nature. Nevertheless, it is arguable that natural resources are the foundation of human material needs, thus allowing abstract resources to be achieved.

this inequality would not enable oppression and exploitation as it does in the present capitalist reality.

In this sense, new economic activities, new taxes, and social assistance policies are essential to secure socioeconomic and environmental justice. An Ecological Unconditional Basic Income should be regarded as a powerful alternative in this context. This type of UBI is in line with the Green Republican concept of freedom as non-domination and may provide society with more just and sustainable relationships among all beings.

The Environmental proposal of a UBI, as opposed to the Ecological proposal, does not aim to solve all of the concerns raised by both Environmental Ethics and Green Republican literature. According to Dobson (2007), the Environmental path aims to adopt sustainable growth and productivism models of society. Therefore, the horizon of the environmental path is neither one of flora and fauna rights nor one where flora and fauna freedom flourishes; it is a horizon in which human exploitation of nature is perpetuated in a sustainable way. In other words, the environmental path does not aim to solve the existing ethical problems in the relationship between human society and nature; it aims to turn the existing oppressive system into a sustainable one¹². It represents the anthropocentric approach to unsustainability. The goal should be to adopt an ecocentric approach that recognizes nature as the central figure.

Even though the environmental path can bring short-term victories in the climate urgency scenario, it does not tackle the basal structures of oppression as the ecological path does. Advocating for sustainable productivism, weak sustainability (Neumayer, 2003), and growth as long-term solutions is only a way to perpetuate the oppressive exploitation of non-human actors. Thanks to technological advancements, it might be possible for humankind to find a way to maintain economic growth models without harming the environment and other living beings in the future. However, this is unlikely to happen anytime soon. Even if we were to adopt sustainable productivism, it would not address the problem of the endless need for accumulation that humans perpetuate, which is a central cause of both environmental and socioeconomic oppression (Souza, 2024).

12 Here, the most common example is the one of animal factories. In the case of animal factories being sustainable, it does not end the oppressive relationship existing between factory owners and livestock.

Therefore, environmentalist measures can have short-term importance when advocating for a transitional society. The gradual implementation of environmental policies can act as a path toward ecologism. In this sense, what justifies environmental measures is an ecological long-term plan.

2 UBI literature review: Walking toward ecologism

This section is destined for UBI normative debates that will serve as the foundation for the debate proposed in the following section. More specifically, the post-productivist tendency of the UBI is debated.

At first glance, the Basic Income can be easily associated with an increase in consumer power through which citizens will be able to achieve socioeconomic security; consequently, the UBI might bring about an increase in deforestation and pollution. However, society is likely to be profoundly transformed because of structural changes produced by a UBI policy (Merrill et al, 2019), more specifically regarding the productivist perspective. Depending on the amount of the UBI dividend¹³, individuals would be able to turn down unworthy job positions, or “Bullshit Jobs,” as Graeber (2018) puts it. Therefore, if a UBI is enough to cover all basic expenses, workers would no longer need to submit themselves to precarious labor conditions to make a living. This panorama shift brought about by a UBI can profoundly transform the economy and mainstream consumerism since it gives individuals economic security and allows them to make long-term plans and entrepreneurial activities.

On the same note, as Standing (2020) explains, the implementation of a Basic Income would give new value to a series of activities that are taken for granted, such as caregiving. Besides, a UBI would also provide people with the possibility to turn down undervalued jobs and focus on long-term careers that are not so feasible today¹⁴. It is thus an opportu-

13 André Gorz (1997), for instance, discusses two basic income proposals as follows. The first would be insufficient and would serve as complementary income so that beneficiaries would have the minimum to survive out of the combination of the aid and their salary, but the need for employment would still exist. The second proposal would be sufficient for subsistence and would spare the individual from labor.

14 This would also stimulate the fourth industrial revolution (Standing, 2020).

nity for the market to value many non-productivist activities and stimulate individual/small entrepreneurs.

Regarding the labor aspects of Basic Income theory, more specifically, one should note that several philosophers argue that the UBI proposition would indeed change the present society. Offe (1992) defends the Basic Income proposal to reduce pressures for full employment and productivism. In this sense, according to the author (Offe, 1992), a UBI opens the possibility for public policies that should be more aligned with environmental and sustainable agendas due to its post-productivist tendency. Also, the policy does not prevent essential public services from being offered by the state, meaning a reformation of the Welfare State, not its dismantlement.

Van Parijs (2013) reminds us that one significant meeting point between “Greens” and Basic Income advocates (at least part of them) is the valorization of free time, leisure, democratic practice, and non-productivist activities¹⁵. For those two groups, it is urgent to revise the permanent economic growth ideal and the measuring of economic success via gross domestic product. The Basic Income can hence be a potent policy to do that. If the BI provides individuals with real freedom by enabling them to perform activities that are not economically attractive, more eco-friendly and sustainable occupations will be taken up, which will help to subvert the productivism logic. Therefore, the main focus of an Ecological Basic Income is to tackle productivism and promote a gradual degrowth agenda, which goes beyond an anti-capitalist struggle.

Nevertheless, it is imperative to understand the limitations of the UBI proposal. The Basic Income idea has a post-productivist tendency. However, other policies are also necessary to prevent UBI implementation from leading to massive consumerism and, thus, an increase in environmental exploitation (such as pollution and deforestation). In this sense, it is essential to perceive the UBI as a robust proposal capable of aiding green transitional agendas but still not self-sufficient and thus dependent on a broader range of policies.

Moreover, another relevant aspect of the UBI is its capacity to stimulate regionalism and circular economies. By allowing small entrepreneurs to have economic security and enabling them to put long-term plans into practice, localist commerce will rise significantly (Merrill et

15 In this case, the term *non-productivist activities* refers to occupations that are not measured in their contribution to the country's GDP, such as care or social volunteer work, for example.

al, 2019). This localist perspective, combined with the possibility of several non-paid activities (Standing, 2020), has significant environmental consequences for circular economies and sustainability. In addition, promoting socioeconomic justice also strengthens the economic security of poorer regions. Empirical data suggests that investing in circular and small economies can have positive effects on environmental matters (Standing, 2020). When talking about circular economy and strengthening regionalism, it is essential to reaffirm that this is an agenda that tends to be less pollutant than international economic systems (Van Parijs, 2009).

The strengthening of regionalism can be done via municipal BI schemes, which does not, however, prevent national BI schemes from being implemented. As a matter of fact, in the case of large and diverse countries, such as Brazil, it is desirable to respect regional singularities and to idealize schemes of cash transfer that respect each cultural and political reality. In other words, due to existing economic idiosyncrasies inside each country, a BI that has national, statal, and municipal levels of payment would be desirable.

Concomitantly, the implementation of municipal currencies to strengthen local economies can have a positive impact on regional inequality. Maricá's Basic Income policy, for instance, shows that the digital non-exchangeable currency implemented in the city prevented capital escape and promoted individual entrepreneur activities, favoring small businesses, creating jobs, and improving socioeconomic levels (Bateman & Teixeira, 2022; Britto et al., 2022; Gama, 2023; Souza, 2022). It is not possible to assume that every municipal UBI will have such an impact, but it is a consequence of the policy that cannot be ignored and might as well serve as a guide to policies yet to be implemented (Merrill et al, 2021).

Another central aspect of the UBI regarding sustainable development is the means through which it will be funded. Neves & Merrill (2023) address the multiple options for financing a UBI. The authors recognize the two most common funding sources considering the Basic Income literature and implemented experiences, namely: (i) wealth, income, inheritance, and land taxation (in order to fight inequality) and (ii) resource exploration taxation (in order to promote common ownership of the natural resources).

Rising tariffs on fossil fuels, for example, can be effective in funding social and environmental policies and discouraging unsustainable

consumption, which will consequently stimulate green alternative fuels (Boyce & Barnes, 2016, Nov 28; Casal, 2012). The so-called Pigouvian taxes can help in this sense. Additionally, since wealthier classes and countries perpetrate most pollutant activities, such ecological taxation would also promote redistributive justice.

Nevertheless, relying on this type of funding to finance policies might be a trap since the long-term goal is to end carbon consumption for good. This taxation could be only a temporary solution to a green-transitional society. Besides, fuel taxation as a UBI funding does not directly target the excessive concentration of wealth and income inequality. Such issues should be tackled through the above-mentioned kinds of taxation schemes, namely wealth, income, inheritance, and land taxation (Neves & Merrill, 2023).

Merrill & Neves (2023) bring up several UBI schemes for Portugal. One of those is the “Unconditional Basic Income for climate policies” (Gama, 2024, as cited in Neves & Merrill, 2023), according to which there would be two paths to be followed: (i) a payment funded by income, wealth, inheritance and Pigouvian environmental taxes, that amounts to 540 euros per month to all adult citizens; (ii) a payment, based only in Pigouvian environmental taxes, that amounts 104,1 euros per month and that would be gradually augmented. The second type, more related to an environmental UBI, is more attainable, whereas the first type, more approachable from an ecological proposal, requires a more complex economic effort. Gama (2024) advocates that this smaller UBI would be more politically feasible and would build political support toward a gradual increase in the transfer.

Such analysis is in line with the proposal defended by the present article, which argues that an environmental policy is valuable for short-term agendas, while the long-term counterparts should aim at ecological policies so as to correct environmental and socioeconomic injustices.

3 Final discussion: Three pillars of the ecological path for the Basic Income

The present essay focuses on defending an Ecological Basic Income. Such a proposal must align with post-productivism/degrowth agendas and socioeconomic/environmental justice. The choice for an Ecological North resides in the understanding that the oppressive relationship

between human society and nature is fundamentally undesirable. Such an oppressive relationship is the basis for accumulation, competition, and oppression among humans. Ecologism enables circular sustainability, fighting both competition and oppression. The ecological alternative is then a circular equilibrium of human and non-human actors, a reality in which resources are obtained via a non-oppressive relationship.

The theoretical foundation for the ecological arguments can be drawn from Environmental Ethics (Almiron & Tafalla, 2019; Almiron & Aranceta-Reboredo, 2022; Bookchin, 2005; Naess, 1973; Rolston, 1975; Routley, 1973) and Green Republicanism (Audier, 2015; Cannavó, 2016; Pinto, 2020). Accepting the inherent and intrinsic value of non-human actors in an ecocentric (non-anthropocentric) perspective is essential to Ecologism. Moreover, it is equally vital to encompass such non-human actors as beings entitled to fundamental rights.

On the grounds of such a theoretical framework, an Ecological Unconditional Basic Income, followed by a green Welfare State, should be regarded as a powerful promoter of ecologism. These public policies are able to provide society with more just and sustainable relationships among all beings. In addition, guiding green public policies, degrowth, and post-productivist agendas should be regarded as central to the Ecological effort.

There are three fundamental questions to consider when setting up the Eco BI scheme: (i) Where do the funds of the Basic Income scheme come from? (ii) Where are the funds being targeted? (iii) How is the payment being made?

3.1. Where is the money coming from?

As shown in the previous section (see section 2), taxing the exploitation of resources that are harmful to the environment is indispensable. In other words, a taxation scheme to discourage non-renewable fuel extraction and its consumption is essential to ecological transition. Using this funding to kickstart Basic Income programs and to stimulate non-pollutant fuel consumption is vital in such an ecological struggle (Merrill & Neves, 2023). Besides, due to the unsustainability and oppression perpetrated by practices such as animal factories, another critical action is to gradually terminate pollutant/oppressive alimentation schemes, which helps to democratize natural resources, respect non-human rights, and stimulate non-pollutant activities.

Wealth and income concentration are also areas that need to be directly taxed. Establishing an economic floor and imposing an economic ceiling (Casassas & De Wispelaere, 2016) would strengthen democratic practice and act against dominative structures. It is vital to keep in mind that socioeconomic and environmental oppressions are entangled in the current capitalist society. A global (historic) reparation scheme so as to tackle transnational inequality is also desirable. Redistribution is pivotal to the present debate, both in the national and international spectra.

For those reasons, the funding of an Eco UBI and an Eco Welfare state should come from (i) resource extraction taxation and (ii) income and wealth redistribution. Resource taxation can initially aid as environmental policy. However, aiming for an ecological policy, income and wealth taxation is still necessary.

3.2. How are the funds being spent?

An Ecological Basic Income scheme needs to be enough for the individual to live off without the need to work. Such sufficient BI payment is a condition to promote the post-productivist agenda and green republican freedom (that is, non-dominative for humans and non-humans). Still, when advocating for reformism, the cash transfer can start at a lower level (Gama, 2024, as cited in Neves & Merrill, 2023) and gradually increase to a larger sufficient payment that satisfies the individual's basic needs.

Providing a high payment of Universal Basic Income (UBI) that covers all basic expenses can bring various ecological benefits. However, some may argue that implementing such a program would be expensive, requiring high taxes and a highly productive economy. This assertion can be misleading because achieving a high UBI payment, post-productivism, and degrowth does not necessarily depend on a productive economy based on current globalized capitalist standards. The reformation of consumerism chains and the increase of leisure and free time in society, which are two central pillars of Ecologism, do not rely on vast wealth or high productivism rates but on a fair distribution of resources and circular sustainable economic models.

A broad public policy framework that helps to decommodify basic human needs is also essential to work along the Eco UBI. Rights such as alimentation, housing, leisure, education, and social activities need to be comprehended from outside the capitalist market perspective and to

be guaranteed as fundamental rights. A Basic Income without a framework of green policies is likely to be vulnerable to economic fluctuation, possibly leading to mass irresponsible consumption and ecological unsustainability/oppression.

Therefore, the pillars of an Ecological transitional society are (i) a UBI payment that is sufficient for the individual to live independently of the labor sphere and (ii) a green Welfare State that helps to decommodify basic human needs. Such pillars can be funded by both resource and wealth/income taxation (see subsection 3.1). Decommodification of basic needs is also a path to be gradually implemented when moving the environmental starting point toward the ecological horizon.

3.3. How is the payment being made?

As brought up in the introductory section of this paper, the fundamental aspects of a UBI payment are the following: (i) unconditionality, (ii) individuality, (iii) universality, (iv) periodicity, and (v) paid in cash (Van Parijs, 2004, p. 8). However, to build an Eco UBI, there are additional points that need to be taken into consideration.

Regional idiosyncrasies are pivotal in the Ecological debate. The UBI payment will not be the same for every citizen; it is imperative to take local singularities into account. Therefore, it is desirable to have different levels of UBI payment (national, regional, stata, and municipal), which in turn should consider the living costs of each region.

Besides, it is essential to stimulate circular economies, which can be helped via social currencies that are only accepted in specific municipalities (e.g., Maricá's Case). It is desirable to build societies that are less pollutant. Regionalism is, in fact, a strong promoter of sustainable and green economic cycles (Van Parijs, 2009), while regional non-exchangeable currencies are influential in promoting regionalism and circularity.

On that account, for a UBI to have an Ecological tendency, the strengthening of aspects such as regionalism and circularity is essential. Through the environmental path of gradual increase in the UBI transfer and taxation reforms, the long-term ecological path is enabled.

3.4. Final remarks

The present work, advocating for the Ecological horizon, hopes to stimulate the philosophical debate on setting up a more just and bal-

anced society. The arguments for Ecologism ideals also do not make it unfeasible for environmental (Dobson, 2007) agendas. Short-term measures are pivotal when concerning green and fair transitional societies, and the Ecological path cannot be taken by all countries the same way. Nonetheless, the present paper argues that the agenda for Ecologism is the best ethical compass to guide social, economic, and environmental/ecological reforms.

The road to the Ecological UBI provides the traveler/citizen with new perspectives and experiences, which are vital when it comes to the Unconditional Basic Income debate. Environmentalism as a road to be taken means a choice that makes Ecologism less utopian and more palatable. This study believes that environmentalism may represent a symbol of progress from different perspectives: individual, social, economic, cultural, and ecological. The traveler can thus have a glance at what might lie ahead: a road to more justice, fairness, and equality in society.

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