David Jenkins*

Distribution and Disruption

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Abstract: Iris Marion Young accuses theories of justice within the distributive paradigm of attending exclusively to the question of the "morally proper distribution of benefits and burdens among society's members". This comes at the cost of a deeper analysis of politics, detracting from the workings of power that structure the relations and processes that are the causes and sites of injustice. I argue that UBI both develops Young's criticisms and corrects for her hasty dismissal of the power generated by the (specifically unconditional) holding of resources. By developing an alternative account of resistance that builds on Young's social ontology we are able both to deepen our understanding of resistance and position UBI as an aspect of it. This helps fill out and expand on other defences of UBI that appeal to its capacity to facilitate refusals of various kind.

Keywords: Iris Marion Young, distribution, disruption, power, resistance

"Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did and it never will. Find out just what any people will quietly submit to and you have found out the exact measure of injustice and wrong which will be imposed upon them, and these will continue till they are resisted with either words or blows, or both. The limits of tyrants are prescribed by the endurance of those whom they oppress."

Fredrick Douglass

Theorising justice in ways that draw too heavily on the language of distribution has been criticised for obfuscating other issues of profound political consequence. While there have been many different critiques of distributional theories of justice, in this paper I build on Iris Marion Young's critique of what she labels the "distributive paradigm". As part of the alternative approach she develops, Young stresses the need to think about the relations, processes and structures that produce and reproduce inequalities in power between differently situated agents, and the various kinds of oppression and domination that are systematically generated as a consequence.

I want to suggest that Young's criticisms of the distributive paradigm offer important analytical tools that can be used to justify an unconditional basic

^{*}Corresponding author: David Jenkins, Institut für die Wissenschaften vom Menschen, Vienna, Austria, E-mail: davidjjenkins7@hotmail.com

income (UBI). She points us toward alternative justifications that are better able both to accommodate her sophisticated social ontology and recognise what she identifies as the causes and processes that produce injustice. UBI is not necessarily tied to the distributive paradigm: It is only a policy proposal capable of being employed by a wide variety of approaches to politics and justice. Employing Young's understanding of the processes producing *injustice*, provides a possible means of conceiving of UBI as a corrective.

I begin with Young's evaluation of the distributive paradigm. Distributive approaches to justice are those which describe the "morally proper distribution of benefits and burdens" (Young, 1990, p. 15). It is an approach that understands justice in terms of the allocation of relevant goods. This has the double effect, Young argues, of both ignoring the deeper institutional and structural contexts that constitute injustice, as well as misrepresenting certain non-material goods and resources that cannot be described as "things" requiring distribution. In Young's alternative methodology, political theorists develop a more "processoriented understanding of society" (Young, 1990, p. 37). Focussing on power, decision-making structures and the relations between different agents and institutions, political theory will better understand the means by which to confront injustice.

Having considered Young's criticisms and her explication of where she believes theorists' should direct their inquiries, I move onto considering how UBI relates to the charges she makes against distribution. I first distinguish between theories of justice that conform to the distributive paradigm and distributive proposals more generally. I employ Young's critique to analyse both Phillippe Van Parijs' distributive defence of UBI and Ronald Dworkin's account of the "equality of resources". It is UBI's allocative principle – the unconditional provision of a certain income to qualifying members of a society – that differs from what Young would label a "traditional" distributive logic, precisely because it leaves underdetermined the *burdens* individuals are obliged to observe in their cooperation with others. UBI as a distributive *proposal* is thus able to survive any association with the distributive *paradigm*. Moreover, UBI also retains certain advantages Young overlooks in her theorising about power, in particular the power afforded individuals who are in possession of unconditional material resources.

Combining Young's criticisms of distribution with Frances Fox-Piven's account of historically effective resistance, I argue that a UBI can contribute to the kinds of social movement that have historically produced important social and political changes. By securing individuals in ways not previously possible, individuals can more readily break the rules of social life, withdraw from practices they consider unjust and develop new practices that are more just. It is UBI's

disruptive potential that means it can both evade Young's criticisms of distribution and incorporate her methodological concerns at the level of both theory and political practice.

Distributive paradigm

Distribution is an important part of justice. As things stand, there are enormous inequalities in the distribution of, for example money: A tiny minority of people have an obscene amount while the great majority have little. Any theory of justice undoubtedly has to address such inequalities – an obvious way being to take money from those that have it and giving it to those that do not. That (re)distribution will not only increase a great many people's purchasing power, it will also have other important effects like allowing people to take control of their own lives and increasing self-respect.

However, we should be wary, Young suggests, of too quickly collapsing all theorising of justice into the language of distribution. Young suggests that "philosophical theories of justice tend to restrict the meaning of social justice to the morally proper distribution of benefits and burdens among society's members". Young does not want to suggest that distribution should play no part in our theorising about justice. It is rather the way in which distribution has come to define our discussions of justice that she finds troubling: Justice and distribution have become synonyms for one another.

Young is of course far from being alone in raising these doubts. The epigram which opens her assessment of the distributive paradigm is taken from Karl Marx's ([1875]1977) Critique of the Gotha Programme. Marx lamented the ways in which his contemporary German socialists failed to recognise the limitations of a purely distributional focus that necessarily restricted their very thinking to the "narrow horizon of bourgeois right" (p. 569). By ignoring the "mode of production" in favour of making demands referring only to the "means of consumption", the socialists were destined to misconstrue the radical nature of the problems that should have exercised their concerns and informed their practical activity. Anything other than an analysis that goes to the root of the processes and structures determining the contemporary play of events is destined to be merely a superficial and palliative offering.

Another critique is that offered by Elizabeth Anderson (1999), who takes particular aim at one expression of the distributive paradigm. "Luck egalitarianism" refers to a specification of a particular allocative principle: Namely, that individuals deserve that for which they can be held responsible (both good and bad), but should neither profit nor suffer from that for which they bear no responsibility. The "morally proper" distribution of benefits and burdens is that which conforms to this distinction. Anderson accuses the luck-egalitarian approach of misconstruing the subject of justice and the content of just institutions. As a consequence of these misconstruals it implicitly insults the dignity of human-beings, regarding them more as objects of pity in need of compensation than as individuals standing in relations to other individuals and institutions, demanding respect, fair treatment and all the other constitutive aspects of a just democratic order.

However, Young's analysis is of particular interest in light of its more explicit targeting of the distributive paradigm as a whole – rather than simply an instance of it – and, in contrast to Marx, its more expansive understanding of the relevant social ontology, going beyond the Marxian understanding of history and political economy as the only legitimate explanandums of both injustice and social change. In addition, while all three can be described as stressing the relational, processual and structural aspects of injustice, Marx's analyses goes beyond the confines, not only of distribution, but of justice more generally. Within Marxist literature, there is great controversy over the relevance of the term "justice" as a description of Marxism's overriding concern (Geras, 1985; Tucker, 1969; White, 1996; Wood, 1972). It is therefore Young's methodology which retains the language of justice alongside a trenchant analysis of what happens when distribution comes to dominate too great a part of that language.

Young takes particular aim at two consequences of conflating discussions of justice with the language of distribution. The first consequence is the way in which a focus on distribution implicitly ignores the wider institutional context against which distributions occur. The second consequence is the misrepresentation of non-material goods and resources when they are construed through the prism of allocation and possession. By evaluating distributions in this way, Young paves the way both for her alternative paradigm and also for an alternative justification for UBI.

i) Institutional context

Distributional theories of justice tend to restrict their analysis to the allocation of income, wealth, offices and various other goods. This, Young has it, inevitably obscures the institutional context, particularly the additional questions of "the justice of decisionmaking (*sic*) power and procedures that cannot be collapsed into deliberations about the proper material distribution of things" (Young, 1990, p. 20). Nevertheless, it is the institutional context that produces the conditions within which any allocation is made possible. An important, causal

dimension of any distributional pattern is therefore overlooked: An exclusively distributive focus, to put it idiomatically, mistakes the waves for the ocean.

In ideal conditions, focussing on questions of distribution might not seem to have this obscuring effect. For example, when Ronald Dworkin (2000) conducts his clam auction/insurance scheme it is importantly set-up on a desert island, away from institutional structures as they have been historically developed. All the cultural, racial and gender-related iniquities constitutive of that history are bleached out of the theory. In such an abstract scenario, it might be appropriate – or at least not inappropriate – to start with matters of distribution, allocating material goods according to principles which when followed bring about a just end-state pattern that can be employed as a standard by which to judge real-world institutions. The institutional context emerges *after* the principles describing justice (in terms of distribution) have been established. This is in keeping with Rawls' own stipulation that accounts of justice "presuppose a moral conception of institutions" (Rawls, 1999, p. 95): Our assessment of the "moral" standing of institutions is thus to be measured according to the distribution of goods they manage to secure.

However, limiting the relevant context to ideal theory simply places the obfuscation at a deeper level. By abstracting away from the injustices that characterise our institutional context, a distributional focus remains unable to properly recognise the relevance of *power*. From within the paradigm, power is something to be understood and derived from descriptions of just distribution. It is not theorised distinct from issues of distribution. Theory which brackets issues of race, gender, class or any other cleavage that tends to affect the power between individuals and groups, presupposes the primacy of allocation over other important political issues. Abstracting away from such concerns is to vacate an important terrain of politics.

For Young, this assumption made by proponents of distributive theories of justice means they are unable to frame issues of, for example, the biased representation of ethnic minorities in a nations' cultural diet of films, literature and television, or the structures that designate the division of labour and the content of people's activity in the workplace. As a consequence, distributional theories of justice are unable to recognise that the ways in which power is generated, organised and structured "are at least partly the cause(s) of patterns of distribution of jobs or wealth" (Young, 1990, p. 22). It is by first attending to these organisational and structural processes that Young believes political theory will be better able to comprehend the complex subject of justice without relying on a merely quantitative discussion of the "stuff" people have or should have. With this different emphasis in mind, distribution is better understood as a consequence of the asymmetries in power that are at play in social, political and economic life.

Proper attention to the institutional context requires attending to the structures and procedures that are used to make decisions regarding that very context. For example, political theory's interest in the economy should not just be a study in who has how much money, but of who decides the organisation of economic resources, the rules and norms that should regulate employer-employee relations, the quantity of work a person should be expected to perform, etc. There are also the definitions of occupations within the workplace and the "range of tasks performed in a given position, the definition of the content, meaning, and value of those tasks, and the relations of cooperation, conflict, and authority among positions" (Young, 1990, p. 23). Finally, there is also the language, symbols, meanings and "habitual comportments" through which people communicate with one another. The subtle ways in which these combine to condition our understandings of other people is something that cannot be properly captured by the study of how wealth or offices are allocated.

ii) Overextending the concept of distribution

A possible response to this description of the distributive paradigm's shortcomings is to accept that a limited understanding of allocation is inadequate, and then extend the meaning and application of the goods which get allocated. In other words, the task of distributing the "fundamental rights and duties" expands to include reference to decision-making, power and positions of office. Those seemingly intangible benefits of self-worth, social standing and prestige lie within the (adequately adjusted) range of distributive principles of justice. Culture, decision making and the division of labour are thus incorporated within the distributive paradigm.

However, Young believes this way of thinking about such issues misrepresents what is at stake. Interpreting those wider institutional processes in distributive terms, "reifies aspects of social life that are better understood as a function of rules and relations than as things" (Young, 1990, p. 25). It fixes what is in reality being produced and reproduced by the actions, intentions, anticipated and unanticipated consequences of a great many complexly interacting agents. For example, the self-respect of welfare recipients that might be enabled by an increased allocation of resources is not simply a side-effect of the money received. It is also dependent on the methods by which access to that money is gained, and the culture surrounding the allocation of that money, i.e. how such receipt is viewed by their fellow citizens (Wolff, 1998). Facts of possession should not be abstracted from these considerations. The distributive paradigm's tendency to boil things down into "stuff" that can be allocated like just so much money is to obfuscate the nature of the goods with which we should be concerned, as well as the ways in which those goods are produced.

Young makes an additional criticism that refers to the underlying normative image of the person that is, in her view, the inevitable complement to a distributive way of framing of justice. If justice describes what individuals have – how much they have and how that is to be compared with others' amounts – then they are being framed as possessors. This emphasis conceals alternative understandings of the person, which emphasise activity over possession.

As soon as we think of individuals in terms of what they do, we simultaneously shift focus towards the forms that action takes: In particular, how intentions are formed and actions performed under a given set of rules, and how the actions of various individuals' activity are rule-governed in specific, concrete ways that combine to recursively influence the contexts and rules within which those agents operate, sometimes enforcing those rules, sometimes straining against them (Young, 2011, p. 53). When people work, for example, they do not merely apply a certain amount of effort for a certain amount of time to a certain task which is then rewarded with a certain allotment of goods. The definitions and meanings of work are intelligible only in light of the organisation, imperatives and needs that structure and make necessary the work being performed (Young, 1990, pp. 216-222).

The possession and use of resources is thus dependent on taking prior account of the structures and processes that, while not completely determinative, nevertheless profoundly influence how resources are possessed and used. This emphasis on doing thus has the advantage of being able to include reference to the possessive aspect of persons without collapsing our entire understanding of agency into it. While I broadly endorse this aspect of Young's critique, I will argue below that the possessive aspect of distribution can provide crucial insights into how we think of power.

To summarise Young's overall critique of the distributive paradigm: First, she takes it for task for unduly emphasising the allocation of benefits and burdens, thereby marginalising the institutional context and misconstruing political, social and economic realities. She accuses distributive theories of justice of being unable to grasp and evaluate the decision-making power and procedures which structure the practices, rules and norms, language and symbols that guide the intentions, actions and interactions of people within the family, civil society, workplace, and the state.

Secondly, she attacks such theories for misrepresenting non-material goods. In particular, she disapproves of the way distributive approaches "reify aspects of social life that are better understood as a function of rules and relations", turning them into things and end-state patterns that cannot but ignore the processes that produce and reproduce those patterns over time. This emphasis on the design and evaluation of various ideal end-state patterns inevitably marginalises the dynamic production and reproduction of those patterns and abstracts theory from the "institutional rules and relations" that govern agents' activities and interactions with one another. This deprives the entire approach of the means "to bring (those rules and relations) into evaluation" (Young, 1990, p. 30). Finally, as a consequence of the inadequate description of the scope and content of discussions of justice, the distributive paradigm emphasises agents' "having" and "possessing" resources, excluding an understanding that concentrates on their "doing" and "acting".

Proposals and paradigms

It is important to recognise that UBI is not itself a theory of justice that falls within this distributive paradigm. It is only a distributive *proposal* that can be justified from a variety of different positions, some of which will altogether stand outside that paradigm.¹ However, it is UBI's distinct advantage that, *as* a distributive proposal, it can be derived from Young's emphasis on the structures and processes that define what she believes should be the terrain of political theory. More than this: UBI also offers a possible means by which to confront the injustices Young's insights help us to identify. Taking seriously Young's critique of the distributive paradigm we thus open up a fruitful, alternative basis of justification for UBI.

In order to illustrate the ways in which different theories of distributive justice operate, I shall draw on examples offered by Ronald Dworkin's work on the "equality of resources" (2000) and Philippe Van Parijs' real-libertarian defence of UBI (1995). Examining the ways in which these theories of justice bracket the kinds of issues Young believes should organize political theory helps to distinguish between recommendations emerging from distributive theories of justice, and UBI as a particular distributive proposal, ultimately distinguishable from that paradigm.

Rather than rehearsing the actual detail of Dworkin's well-known proposals, it will suffice to repeat the distinction between "choice" and "chance" – or "option" and "brute" luck – that forms a major part of his account of justice. This distinction describes the kinds of things which can affect a person's life, capturing the idea that choices can be made against unchosen backgrounds while remaining objects of responsibility. Equality of resources is achieved

¹ I thank two anonymous reviewers at *Basic Income Studies* for their help in making this distinction.

when, given appropriately fair starting points, individuals are held responsible for their choices and protected from the disadvantages and/or denied the advantages of their circumstance (Dworkin, 2000 p. 89). It is therefore the choices people make - controlling as far as possible for all circumstantial factors – that define the morally appropriate distribution of benefits and burdens, and thus the content of a just social order. Within Dworkin's account of the "equality of resources", the wider institutional context, the societal structures, and the historically-conditioned processes and norms against which citizens interact and cooperate, are not addressed. Instead, the key function performed by institutions in this is the tracking of that morally relevant distinction between choice and chance (see also Roemer, 1998).

Whereas for Dworkin a just social order is in large part described by ensuring distribution conforms to the choice/chance distinction, for Van Parijs the distribution of the "highest unconditional income for all consistent with security and self-ownership" (Van Parijs, 1995, p. 32) provides an exhaustive description of social justice. For Van Parijs distributing the highest sustainable UBI is the means by which real freedom is instituted. This freedom is achieved by maximising the opportunities for the least well off – the leximinning of opportunities – "subject to the protection of a structure of rights that incorporates self-ownership". The distribution of a UBI accomplishes this leximinning by ensuring that everyone is properly able to do what they would like to do (Van Parijs, 1995, p. 26). Put schematically, "real-freedom-for-all... is all there is to social justice" and real freedom is achieved via the distribution of the highest sustainable unconditional basic income (Van Parijs, 1995, p. 5).

As an aspect of his account of real freedom, Van Parijs also describes the conditions that would shape a just distribution of burdens. To this end, an important part of his defence of UBI involves tracing the consequences that follow from recognising that jobs are a scare resource from which some are inevitably and structurally excluded (Van Parijs, 1995, pp. 108-132). UBI is, in part, a means of responding to this unequal access and delivers profound – and radical – consequences for what can be considered an obligation – namely, that people have the right to a basic income without work requirements. In his response to Stuart White, Van Parijs is explicit on this matter: The issue of what people owe to one another – in everything from productive labour to involvement in the kinds of decision-making that exercise Young's critique can only be appealed to after the distribution of UBI. To demand anything prior to that distribution interferes with the justice of the situation that would be achieved by the distribution of UBI (White, 1997; Van Parijs, 1997, pp. 329-330).

However, this understanding of what can and cannot be considered a "productive obligation" offers a limited understanding of burdens that is very different to that which exercise Young's emphases on oppression, hierarchy and domination. Rather than treating UBI merely as a means by which to respond to the constraints of a necessarily imperfect labour market, I shall argue that UBI can be employed as a means to more directly confront the problems of oppression and domination that Young accuses the distributive paradigm of marginalising.

While Dworkin's and Van Parijs' accounts are different in many regards – motivated by different priorities and emphases, grounded in different understandings of the relevant concepts and in different metaphysical assumptions, etc. – they are similar in that both assume that justice can be substantively defined in distributive terms. In summary, Dworkin's "equality of resources" assumes that justice can be established by institutions which are able to adequately bracket autonomously-taken choices from circumstances. Van Parijs, on the other hand, treats freedom as something that can be fully facilitated by the possession of some particular good, namely a monetary income administered without work-requirements. The relevance of power within the decision-making structures, particularly with regards to our understanding and uses of "freedom", and the hierarchical relations between different agents and institutions are simply not taken into account by either of these theories of justice. For Young, what these instances of the distributive paradigm bracket or ignore should in fact provide the primary locus of political theory (see also Tully, 2000).

An alternative justification

In order to properly recognise and build on Young's evaluation of the distributive approach to justice, an alternative justification of UBI must do two things. First, rather than focus exclusively on the allocation of goods like income, and the establishment of patterns derived from the allocation of those goods, it must turn its attention more explicitly to matters of power and the procedures by which decisions are made and enforced in the cooperative life of a community. Secondly, and relatedly, any feasible justificatory framework must recognise the processual nature of social life, the norms and practices that constitute the institutional context.

Young charges the distributive treatment of power with mischaracterising it as a "machine or instrument, held in ready and turned on at will, independently of social processes". This implicitly "treats power as some kind of stuff that can be traded, exchanged, and distributed", missing the structural phenomenon of domination and the way in which power is generated and sustained as a result of the "intended and unintended product of the actions of many people" (Tully, 2000,

p. 32). Distributional responses to asymmetries in power implicitly treat individuals as static "nodes, points in the social field, among whom larger or smaller bundles of social goods are assigned" (Young, 1990, p. 18).

The accusation that the distributive paradigm necessarily involves a mistaken vision of power would seem to carry over into distributive proposals. If the processual and reiterative nature of power is something to be taken seriously, then appealing to UBI as a potentially transformative proposal would, at first glance, appear to do exactly what Young warns against: UBI is the allocation of a "bundle" of a particular good, i.e. income, in the hope that it will function as something like a "machine" that can help transform the relational asymmetries that currently define the political, economic and social life of a community. It is an example of responding to problems of process and structure with the brute force of resources.

Accordingly, distribution – taken widely to include both theories of justice and proposals more generally – would seem to necessarily assume a mistaken social ontology regarding the ways individuals relate to one another, unable as it is to comprehend how power shapes those relations. Having distinguished UBI as a distributive policy proposal from the distributive paradigm, there remains an important contribution that UBI has the potential to make with regards to this question of power. This understanding of power draws on the view of the individual as a possessor and is thus, implicitly at least, overlooked by Young, who too quickly dismisses the potentially radical effects that possession, most especially when that possession is unconditional, can have for individuals.²

Now, perhaps when it comes to complex goods more generally the distributive understanding does misconstrue their nature: How can self-respect, for instance, be assigned in this way, i.e. as a "stuff" which can be allocated across persons in a quantitative fashion? However, when it is limited to income, the idea of individuals possessing some given "bundle" of income can actually provide a powerful practical and analytical tool, precisely when considering these issues of power.

The minimal allocative principle underpinning UBI as a distributive proposal does not exhaustively describe either benefits or burdens: As a proposal it merely indicates a sum of money to be given to all qualifying citizens without

² Of course, any radicalism assumes it is of a sufficiently high level. A UBI of £1 a week will produce neither real freedom nor any other real or lasting benefit. To give a sense of an appropriate level to be envisaged and approximated, the Joseph Rowntree Foundation's stipulation of a 'social inclusion rate' or 'minimum income standard' of some £16,234-around 2/3 of the UK median income - provides a good description of the functions a UBI should aim to perform in order to fulfil the functions I imagine for it here (though rent controls would inevitably reduce this considerably). Joseph Rowntree Foundation, Monitoring Poverty and Social Inclusion 2014. Retrieved from: http://www.jrf.org.uk/sites/files/jrf/MPSE-2014-FULL.pdf

means-testing or work requirements. Where people have possession of money without conditions, they are better able to confront, refuse or renegotiate demands made of them in all areas of their lives – personal relationships, work and public life – and the burdens they are therefore expected to assume. It is therefore uniquely geared toward recognising both Young's description of social ontology as a series of complexly iterative interactions, and also providing a means by which the quality of those interactions can be confronted.

This insight has already been largely captured by certain defenders of UBI. For example, Carole Pateman recommends UBI as a way of providing the space for citizens to reflect on the structural interrelationships that characterise contemporary society, giving them the space to leave and/or challenge relationships they regard as an insult to their dignity or as simply too burdensome to be worth their while (Pateman, 2003, p. 138; Pateman, C. 2004, pp. 89–105). Relatedly, there is also Karl Widerquist's development of the notion that freedom, understood as effective control over one's own life, requires the ability to refuse interaction with other parties, essentially to be able to say "no" to that interaction (Widerquist, 2013). The asymmetric interdependence that characterises social life, and which Young places at the centre of her theory, is here recognised as relevant for both the descriptions of political realities and the justification of UBI.

More generally: In contemporary circumstances a great many individuals might have to accept injustices suffered at work or in personal relationships because remaining in them is, quite rationally, considered the best of the available options. In this context, UBI becomes the initiation of a better worse option than would have been previously enjoyed. In so doing, UBI creates a "protected position" for people (Pettit, 1996, 2007). Having access to a stream of revenue that cannot be jeopardised by a decision to leave any particular role or relationship enables individuals to stand back from their involvements and challenge them. There are various ways to use this protected position: one can use it to leave a dull job to return to school and retrain, leave a particular firm and look for other work or develop one's own employment opportunities, finish a relationship that has become abusive or unrewarding, or else use the *threat* of all of the above to demand changes to one's situation.

It is precisely the *possession* of a UBI that enables both this protected position and the various function derived from that protection: It is *having* resources sufficient enough to support individuals outside of employment or an abusive relationship that enables them to withdraw their efforts from the production and reproduction of the norms and structures that govern their activity. The emphasis on what individuals might "do" to resist the status quo is predicated on their first "having" a UBI. Possession is thus reincorporated as a

major, constitutive aspect of active agency, precisely in terms of developing a resistant, confrontational form of power that can be exercised against structures and relationships as they currently exist. In this respect, then, UBI emphasises the "having" of sufficient material resources as a critical condition – though by no means a sufficient one – for transformative political action.

Real resistance

However, while the above defences of UBI are important, the descriptions of resistance underpinning their account of agency suffer from a number of oversights. The first is that the notion of resistance it draws on is often too individualistic. We have wives resisting husbands and workers resisting employers without including a proper analysis of the ways in which resistance usually involves collectivities: Either in the sense of a coordinated, self-identifying group or a spontaneous mass of people. However it is conceived, the sheer quantity of people involved has important implications.

Secondly, the citizens at the heart of the republican notion of non-domination are simply too well-behaved. He or she engages with opponents in the public sphere in a manner that is both reasonable and respectful (Young, 2001, p. 669 makes similar criticisms). The image of the republican citizen is never – explicitly at least – one who could join in riots, belligerently confront intransigent bureaucrats en masse, engage in the strategic destruction of property, or physically coerce individuals into respecting boycotts or industrial action (Walzer, 1970, pp. 37-39). However, at one time or another, such disruptive behaviour has been absolutely crucial in moving societies toward more social justice (see for example Tyson, 2004).

To give some substance to these admittedly provocative suggestions, I will draw on Frances Fox Piven's (2006) analysis of the conditions that need to be fulfilled for disruptive resistance to have a chance at success. Her analysis of disruption shares, in important ways, Young's view of what defines and structures the social world. However, it also includes a comprehensive account of the kinds of actions that are liable to drive change from within that world.

In order to take Young's criticisms of the distributive paradigm seriously, we must first develop an alternative map of the political landscape, incorporating a more fundamental emphasis on power and the structural quality of injustice. Developing this alternative landscape has two consequences: First, by understanding how power operates, we can develop a complementary emphasis on how it is disrupted – illuminating a possible means by which UBI might one day be achieved. Second, we can better understand the role UBI could – in a world after its introduction – play within that landscape as a means of enabling resistance and confronting injustice on a more permanent basis. In what follows, I give a general account of the conditions of disruption, before positioning UBI in terms of its relation to the possibilities for disruption.

It is thus at this intersection between a better *understanding* of the world that must be confronted by those concerned with alleviating injustice, and an account of the *means* by which it can be confronted, that a novel justification of UBI can be grounded. From the beginning then, it should be recognised that UBI is neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition for performing the kind of activity that disrupts or upsets the processes and practices of social life: The very ubiquity of such activity throughout history (sans UBI) is testament to that fact.

The first of Fox-Piven's six conditions for successful disruption is for those agents intent on bringing about change, to recognise and understand the complex interdependence that characterises social life. This chimes with Young's primary complaint against distributive theories of justice, i.e. that they tend to marginalize the relevance of this interdependence. There operates within this paradigm, she argues, "a misleading ideal that each person can be independent of others and internalize the costs of their own actions" without regard to their relations with others. In other words, this personalised and atomised understanding of responsibility marginalises the complexity of social life, obfuscating the profound ways in which the "institutional relations in which we act render us deeply interdependent" (Young, 2011, p. 4). For both Young and Piven, abstracting from this interdependence can have a depoliticising effect, obscuring both our understanding of injustice and, additionally, the means by which social change can be accomplished.

The second condition is the willingness to break the rules and norms that govern social life. It is here where an ability to refuse acquiescence in that interdependency described above is employed in a more agitational and confrontational manner than is often admitted. For example, during the depressionera in the United States, huge groups of the destitute unemployed would spontaneously and aggressively fill-up relief offices, ignoring bureaucratic procedure and overwhelming employees' (and the police's and the national guards') capacity to deal with them. As a consequence of this kind of action and the threat it issued to the status quo, large amounts of money were immediately released to people who could not find work, the government initiated the Works Progress Administration (WPA) and funds were made available at a Federal level to deal with the growing mass of the immiserated poor (Fox Piven & Cloward, 1979, Ch. 2). Piven and Richard Cloward have suggested that this ability of the oppressed to apply "negative sanctions (to) institutional

matrixes" and practices has been the primary mover of radical social change in the modern age (Fox Piven & Cloward, 1979, pp. 24-32).

Introducing these notions of disruption and the breaking of rules offers another sense in which the distributive paradigm implicitly obfuscates issues of power. The strategy of the distributive paradigm is to design ideal patterns of distribution which then act both as ultimate standards of justice and as principles to work toward. Justice is in part achieved by bringing those distributionalpatterns to bear on the real-world. However, what might need to be done to drive change in the world as it stands, to reach a situation where that pattern might be entertained as a priority, cannot be derived from such descriptions: What might be unacceptable in an ideal world becomes necessary in the real one (Jenkins, 2015). By placing front and centre both interdependence and the breaking of rules that structure that interdependence, we avoid obfuscating the actual concrete demands that are made of individuals in situations characterised by injustice. More crucially, we recognise that whatever purpose the design of ultimate standards of justice might perform, there remains crucial theoretical work to be done regarding our own deeply imperfect world.

The third and fourth conditions refer to the need for coordination between the various agents whose multiple contributions are needed to effectively mobilize disruptive power. For instance, in light of the existence of global supply chains, workers who are fighting for improvements to working conditions in their part of the world would benefit enormously from complementary pressure – in the form of strikes or lock-ins perhaps – applied elsewhere along that chain. The solidarity that sometimes occurs between students and workers might also offer an example of solidarity.

The creation of this solidarity is not always a peaceable process. Michael Walzer (1970) describes the moment during an industrial dispute where the call goes out and tools are downed. One worker, Kenny Malone, holding a wrench in his hand screams into the face of a wavering worker "Get off your job, you dirty scab" (p. 39). This is undoubtedly a coercive act – the fact that the wrench was ultimately used as a threat only is neither here nor there. It is not that any degree of coercion is justified in such moments. But where the existence of collective action is recognised, some use of coercion at some moment in the galvanising of that collective, might prove necessary for the success of the action.

Withdrawal and withstanding

The first four conditions do not have any immediately obvious relation to UBI – except as descriptions of what might need to be done to achieve it. However, the last two of Fox-Piven's conditions do have direct relevance for a world in which UBI *has been* introduced. It should be kept in mind of course – to avoid any circularity – that successful resistance of the kind needed for *enactment* of a UBI will also need these conditions fulfilled *absent* a UBI. In other words, where UBI provides the means to "withdraw" and "withstand" there is also the need to find the means to perform these tasks without UBI, if it is to one day be a possibility.

The fifth condition is the ability of agents engaged in disruption to "find ways to endure the suspension of cooperation". The sixth and final condition describes the ability to "withstand the threat of exit that disruption provokes" (Fox-Piven, 2006, pp. 30–31). When people refuse to acquiesce in the norms that structure social life, they also exclude themselves from the goods, however limited, to which they previously had access precisely as a consequence of that acquiescence. This is most obvious during strikes when refusing to engage in productive labour directly affects the salaries workers are able to take home. This can cause enormous strain on individuals and families which rely on this wage to pay for the roof over their heads, clothes on their back and food in their mouths. Indeed, one of the historical advantages of spontaneous mob rioting is that it is relatively short-lived and thus does not precipitate the need for extended endurance (Fox-Piven, 2006, p. 30). However, for prolonged insurgency there remains the need to develop the means by which withdrawal can be sustained. UBI is an obvious candidate for such a purpose.

With the provision of UBI, workers that might previously have been divided by the fear of a loss of livelihood would no longer be exposed to the same degree of vulnerability. Where employers currently possess the means to "invigilate" their employees' behaviour with threats of punitive action should behaviour not conform to expectations, such tactics would be severely impeded by the institution of a (sufficiently high) UBI (Pettit, 2007, p. 4). As a consequence, workers can more securely and confidently stand in solidarity with colleagues – and other relevant agents – throughout their shared struggles and the confrontations inevitably invoked.

In addition, when refusing acquiescence can precipitate the exit of the opposing party, there is also the need to develop the means of resistance specific to this task. UBI as a strike fund is certainly a plausible notion, but should it trigger the total exit of the employer it is no longer properly described as such a fund: The opposition has vacated the terrain of the dispute and the conflict has basically ended. In such instances, UBI becomes either the means by which the search for alternative employment is enabled, or part of the means by which alternative practices can be developed. By developing these alternative practices, the threat of exit can be both faced down and, if eventually precipitated, survived (Fox-Piven, 2006, pp. 28–30).

Stuart White's suggestions with regards to the purposes of basic capital can be applied to basic income: The collective saving and pooling of different people's basic income could provide "otherwise asset-poor individuals with greater access to credit markets and, in this way, could increase the formation of worker-owned and -managed enterprises" (White, 2003, pp. 194-195). Some individuals will take advantage of this possibility. However, the mere availability of such an option can have positive consequences for those who do not use their UBI in this way. When withdrawal from more traditional employment practices is rendered a genuine – rather than a merely formal – opportunity, there also emerges possibilities to correct for current asymmetries in bargaining power. UBI could thus prove instrumental in developing new productive practices that can be used to withstand the threat of exit that disruption provokes.

Taking Young's own example, the Arab actor who can only find work playing a terrorist is performing a role defined by an industry tainted by racist representations. This is further reinforced by a wider culture that produces and reiterates the intelligibility and acceptability of those roles. By taking on these roles, such actors are inevitably reproducing those narrow and uncomplicated representations, contributing to the proliferation of cultural products that do nothing to combat the prejudices that underpin and make sense of them.

This is precisely where the disruptive function of UBI could prove useful as practical tool of resistance. Where individuals gain the ability to refuse roles they find offensive, degrading or unfulfilling then they are also able to disrupt the production of those representations in the wider culture. Where Arab actors must currently take on such roles because they are all that is available to him, the improved worst-option or fall-back position provided by UBI, allows for the possibility to refuse those roles and renegotiate the terms.

Again, this is in keeping with the previously described republican insights that being able to say "no" is a crucial part of effective self-control. My intention is not to reject these insights, but only to fill them out with a more comprehensive account of the additional conditions of protest and resistance. It is simply too quick to suggest that UBI will necessarily lead to the changing of such roles: There might well be Arab actors, unconcerned with these representations, who would willingly sweep up these roles vacated by more conscientious or politically aware others. Moreover, individuals need not perform any renegotiation at all – they can simply exit such involvements with which they want to play no further part. Transformation requires the kinds of collective action that are enabled by Fox-Piven's other conditions. In this example, pooled UBI might provide capital for more production companies owned and run by minorities, with a remit to creating more sensitive and complex portrayals of underrepresented parts of the population.

Limiting focus to the possibility of individuals (re)negotiating new terms with those in positions of power, without recognising the relevance of collectivities to that process obfuscates important realities about the causes of change. What I am suggesting is that UBI provides an important – but by no means sufficient or even necessary – condition for moves toward such disruptive change: In other words, UBI provides a concrete means by which "negative sanctions" to the "social field" can be more easily applied in the face of institutional resistance. But where those other conditions are not in place, such application is unlikely to be successful.

Post-UBI relevance of disruption

The preceding description of the conditions of disruption combines a vision of the world sympathetic to Young's social ontology with a particular understanding of the means by which injustice is confronted, as well as to speculate on the possible functions UBI could perform in facilitating those confrontations after its introduction. It offers something of a corrective to those broadly republican justifications of UBI that do not fully capture the complexity or the demands of resistance. UBI alone is an insufficient condition for the effective wielding of power. We must be modest about what UBI can accomplish in this regard: What the conditions outlined above suggest is that after UBI has been introduced, it will not by itself be sufficient to generate the disruptive force necessary to bring about social change. It can only contribute the means by which this kind of disruptive potential can be funded given certain other conditions are also met.

This disruptive activity has been effective as a means of making significant gains in the pursuit of justice, long before the (possible) future advent of UBI. However, underlying the disruptive threat in successful examples of poor people's movements is the immiseration suffered by those people: Times got too hard for individuals, who from both desperation and acknowledgement of the fact that their fates were not the result of any individual failing, but were rather the consequence of large-scale systemic failings, began to fight back, resisting and challenging authority (McAlevey, 2014, p. 11; Fox-Piven & Cloward, 1979, p. 44). This view of social and political upheaval posits individuals who, suffering from appalling treatment, *must* resist in order to secure the most basic of goods for themselves and their families. There need be no appeal to abstract principles of right or justice: There is only the bread on the table and the roof above heads. Disruption seems necessarily tied to desperation.

This might be seen to limit the relevance of the strategies I have been outlining. Such tactics remain relevant in light of the increasing precariousness

and insecurity suffered by growing numbers of people (see Standing, 2011). However, once UBI has been successfully introduced, disruption becomes altogether less likely or even necessary. A certain minimum level of security has been reached, poverty effectively eradicated and, more generally, people's standard of living improved. In light of this, the republican defence of UBI I criticise because of its overt individualism and incomplete portrayal of resistance will become an adequate description of the resistance necessary to address the asymmetries in power between agents in a world framed by UBI.

This tacitly assumes that the introduction of UBI will be a game-changer like no other policy in modern history. In the American context, disruption has a powerful historical pedigree: From the abolition of slavery to the development of the welfare state, from the struggle for trade union representation to the enactment of voting rights legislation, the effects of disruptive forms of political action have been profound. Granted, the unconditionality of the basic income offers something radical and novel which will have similarly wide-reaching consequences. However, given that the definition of a UBI does not itself entail its sufficiency we should be weary of falling into a trap that suggests that once a UBI has been introduced, battles waged for justice have been conclusively won: There is every possibility that the introduction of a genuinely adequate UBI will be an incremental accomplishment, privy to setbacks triggered by the resistance of various agents interested in preserving their power – the state; multinational corporations - at every one of those increments.

As with other moments of radical change, vigilance is required to hold the ground that has been gained as a consequence of previous struggles. To return once again to the American context: As a consequence of the Civil Rights Act in 1965, substantial legal rights were won by African-Americans. This transformed the political – particularly the electoral – landscape of American politics. Nevertheless, there has been aggressive pursuit by those in power to erode the relevance of the African-American vote. For example, in Mississippi a citizen convicted of a felony loses the right to vote for life. This disproportionately affects African-Americans who are, for a variety of reasons, more likely to be convicted and incarcerated. This law has meant that thirty percent of black male adults in Mississippi cannot vote (Marable, 2006, p. 31). In addition to mass disenfranchisement, there has been a general trend across the country to demand that people who turn up to vote present photo-IDs to do so – something which, again, disproportionately affects the poor and ethnic minorities. Gains which were won as a consequence of long, often bloody struggles remains liable to attack from those in power.

Tentatively then, it might be that the disruptive moves highlighted above will not be focused on new gains, but rather on protection of what has already been gained by the enactment of a UBI. To (inelegantly) expand on Douglass's opening epigram – not only does power concede nothing without a demand, those who wield power will often react to the victories of struggle with measures that seek to undo the consequences of those victories.

Of course, it may very well be the case that UBI, ultimately, transforms the means by which social change occurs. Correcting contemporary asymmetries in power by securing individuals an unconditional and sufficiently high income will dissipate the kinds of battles that have been historically engaged in. More peaceable and harmonious relationship between old opponents take the place of animosity and conflict. So once UBI is in effect we can assume that agitation and confrontation will no longer be relevant. Conflict might remain but it will lack the same intensity (and indeed violence) that previously characterised such conflict. My argument (happily) retires in such an event. The point is that whether we believe UBI will mean the end of this kind of political activity is conjecture that cannot be tested in current circumstances, i.e. where an unconditional basic income is *not* in effect. However, taking seriously the kinds of moves that those in power are liable to take to regain positions lost in the aftermath of UBI's introduction, there are reasons to be weary of supposing too fundamental a shift in the ways change is achieved.

Interestingly, trade union reluctance to endorse UBI has been framed, at least by the unions themselves, in terms of what it predicts will be negative consequences for labour in its collective conflicts with capital. Where individuals are given the security by state provision of UBI, it will make it easier for capital to dictate its terms to labour. Rather than staying on to fight collectively workers choose instead to look elsewhere or drop out of the labour market altogether: the exercise of "exit" preferred over this particular aspect of "voice". Work and the terms of employment no longer establish a terrain upon which employers can be engaged with in a sustained way, a space of contestation where significant gains can be made so long as workers organise and stand together. Instead, employers can defer demands for wage increases back to the state and urge union representatives to negotiate with public bodies in order to increase UBI, effectively treating it as a wage subsidy and state-sponsored shock absorber (Vanderborght, 2006, pp. 9–11).

However, while the recognition of this problem is important and plausible because it suggests UBI might *undermine* engagement in the kinds of conflict I have been at pains to describe, it is important to avoid collapsing our understanding of collectivities into a much narrower understanding of collectivist *institutions*. Jane McAlevey (2014) is interesting in terms of her (hard-earned!) ambivalence about current trade union practices in the United States. She describes the way trade unions often shy away from genuinely confrontational

action, worried about how such behaviour could impact on the privileged standing of those institutions vis-à-vis other centres of power. There is the possibility then that UBI could effectively mobilize individuals into looser, more ad-hoc collectivities, simultaneously either obliging the more institutionalised, more heavily bureaucratised versions structuring contemporary politics, to transform their approach to politics or else replacing them with a more agitational form of politics described above.

Indeed, there is an historical instance of the fight for something like a UBI that failed, according to Fox-Piven and Cloward, precisely because the movement calcified into a bureaucratically-driven institution. The National Welfare Rights Organisation (NWRO) established in the US in the 1960's adopted an approach that eschewed confrontational, disruptive tactics - ironic in light of the fact that these very strategies had been employed successfully, in large part by the same people, during their struggles against segregation in the American South (Fox-Piven & Cloward, 1979, Ch 5). The NWRO opted instead for a hierarchical and bureaucratic form of political activity, essentially trying to lobby those in positions of power. There was thus an explicit intention to avoid the application of "negative sanctions" at strategic points within the wider political system, or to channel discontent amongst the poor into aggressive disruptive action. As a consequence, Fox-Piven and Cloward argue, the movement never gained significant traction within that system and never forced the intended change.

Whatever happens, it is true that UBI has the potential to alter the institutional context in dramatic ways. For example, the replacement of means-tested benefits with unconditional incomes will mean that swathes of current state administrative bodies will also disappear. Traditionally, these have formed important parts of the disruptive strategies employed by the discontented masses (see Fox-Piven & Cloward, 1979, p. 44). Without the existence of these offices, the application of "negative sanctions" will need to find a different point of access to the institutional matrix. Precisely what these sanctions will look like is almost impossible to specify without a more precise sense of the ways UBI will transform the relations between various agents and the institutional context more generally, as well as the asymmetries of power currently constitutive of our collective political life.

Conclusion

Iris Marion Young's analysis of the distributive paradigm makes profound contributions to our understanding of both justice and injustice that should make us weary of grounding our justifications of UBI according to the logic of that paradigm. However, because of the simplicity of UBI's allocative principle and the incomplete specification of the burdens that individuals are required to assume, it is derivable from a theory of politics and justice that both incorporates her description of social processes, structures and relations and provides a practical account of a possible means of dealing with the injustices produced by them.

However, UBI is limited in what it can achieve in this regard. By drawing on Frances Fox-Piven's account of the various conditions necessary for successful disruption it is possible both to specify that limited role, and also offer a corrective to the sometimes overly simplified understandings of resistance that underpin republican defences of UBI. While it is therefore necessary to counsel against the conclusion that UBI acts as a silver bullet to the solution of all injustices great and small, it nevertheless supplies a possible condition and instrument toward the development of such solutions.

Finally, I answered a possible objection to my account of disruption as a driver for social change. In a world without UBI, these strategies might remain useful. However, so this objection has it, once UBI is introduced, such strategies are rendered defunct and inappropriate precisely because the desperation historically associated with the success of such activities has been eliminated. This rests on a naïve vision that those who enjoy positions of power will simply acquiesce in the face of UBI. While UBI will likely precipitate dramatic changes in the overarching institutional context, it would be foolhardy to cast aside the relevance of this disruptive form of political activity.

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