

Why Switzerland?

Basic Income and the Development Potential of Swiss Republicanism

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Abstract

The aim of this paper is to establish a relationship between the idea of an unconditional basic income and republican thought in general and the Swiss republican tradition in particular. I argue that Swiss republicanism bears a development potential that may provide a normative foundation for the introduction of an unconditional basic income.

Basic income can be justified on grounds of the conception of modern republicanism and its underlying ideal of freedom as non-domination. The Swiss republican tradition shows considerable affinity to this ideal of non-domination; its history can be read as a struggle against domination. In this sense, Swiss republicanism can be linked to the idea of an unconditional basic income. In contrast to other republican traditions in Europe, Swiss republicanism was able to develop and incorporate individualist values in the late eighteenth and nineteenth century.

Swiss republicanism still plays an important role in Swiss politics. The thesis that there still exists a relationship between Swiss republicanism and basic income will be corroborated by virtue of two examples: an old Swiss republican communal tradition that is still practised consists of disbursing an income that shows remarkable similarities to an unconditional basic income grant. Further, in contemporary Swiss social policy, the first pillar of the Swiss pension system bears considerable resemblance to the basic income idea. On the level of welfare regime research, one can even speak of a “soft guarantism” that prevails in Swiss social policy.

In Switzerland, a public discourse about the idea of an unconditional basic income has not yet developed. However, in order to inspire discourse, the link to Swiss republicanism could be emphasised. The pathway to the introduction of an unconditional basic income has begun in Swiss traditions already centuries ago. The prospect of further “good” development in the sense of freedom as non-domination in Switzerland should tie in with Switzerland's own past and tradition.

Introduction: Development as “Real Freedom for All”

What is the aim of development? Where should the development of a society and its economy lead? Every notion of development is based on normative assumptions about what is a “good” economic and political system and a “good” way of life. Every notion of development necessitates value judgments that have to be made explicit and that should be well justified.

In this perspective, virtually every country has to be seen as “developing country”. No country has reached “the end of history”¹ – they all still face the question of which idea of social progress they want to pursue politically. These questions arise now for so-called “developed countries” like Switzerland, too. It seems that their effective development rather leads to an intensification of social “third world”-conditions than to their overcoming. In view of prevalent economic liberalism, widespread social disintegration is seen as the price that has to be paid for “economic progress”.

Amartya Sen, winner of the Nobel Prize in economics in the year 1998, has given a new direction to the discourse in development thinking. For him, development can be seen “as a process of expanding the real freedoms that people enjoy”². It “concentrates on the capabilities of people to do things – and the freedom to lead lives – that they have reason to value”³. Capabilities are defined as a person's or a group's freedom to promote or achieve the various things they may value doing. Close to this view is Philippe Van Parijs's notion of real freedom as the freedom of every person to do whatever one might want to do as well as to have the means for doing it.⁴ According to Van Parijs, the concept of *real freedom for all* necessitates the introduction of an unconditional basic income. Basic income is defined as “an income paid by a political community to all its members on an individual basis, without means test or work requirement.”⁵ Real freedom means having the real possibility to choose among concrete options. According to Van Parijs, it is only possible to live a self-determined life if there are real choices. In a market economy, real freedom depends essentially on purchasing power. It is not the place here to analyse this in depth, but the point is that for Van Parijs, social progress means the expansion of *real freedom for all* and thus the process of introducing an unconditional basic income and maximising its level under certain conditions – development as *real freedom for all*. In view of this normative sense, basic income is highly relevant for de-

¹ Fukuyama (2006).

² Sen (1999: 36).

³ Sen (1999: 85).

⁴ See Van Parijs (1995: 23-24), see also p. 240, where the link to Sen's notion of freedom is depicted.

⁵ Van Parijs (2006: 4).

velopment ethics.⁶ The idea of an unconditional basic income for all has been increasingly discussed, also, and maybe mainly, in economically advanced countries; this shows that meaningful social progress is still possible in “industrialised” countries like Switzerland.

In most German speaking countries the basic income discourse is under way: in 2005, an advertisement campaign was launched in Germany in order to spread the idea of an unconditional basic income.⁷ It was then, if not before, that this radical idea began to shape public discourse about the future of the German welfare state. In Austria too, the concept is getting more and more attention. A basic income congress held in the year 2005 in Vienna⁸ sparked the interest of media and politics in basic income.⁹ And what is the state of affairs in Switzerland? The idea of an unconditional basic income has not reached public discourse yet. I argue, however, that there exists an ingrained civic tradition in Switzerland which is related to the idea of an unconditional basic income. To put it more precisely, I want to make the case that Swiss republicanism bears a potential of modernisation that can be interpreted in a way favourable to basic income.

To begin with, I am going to clarify the notion of republicanism and show how it is linked to the idea of an unconditional basic income. For this purpose, the main features and normative assumptions of two different models of republicanism (neo-Athenian and neo-Roman republicanism) will be described and contrasted to the thought tradition of economic liberalism. In order to relate basic income to republicanism, the neo-Roman strand of thought is further developed to the model of *modern republicanism*. It will be shown how a relationship between *modern republicanism* and its conception of freedom as non-domination and basic income can be established.

As a second step, I will sketch the tradition of Swiss republicanism and its future development potential. Originating from an idiosyncratic medieval civic tradition it seems that Swiss republicanism has a potential of modernisation by reason of which it was able to transform and persist. I will argue that Swiss republicanism bears upon *modern republican* freedom as non-domination and thus on the idea of an unconditional basic income.

In the third chapter, this thesis will be corroborated by means of two examples. I shall present a still persisting communal republican tradition of a universal disbursement resembling basic income. The present-day Swiss social policy will be explored and further links to the idea of a basic income will be revealed.

⁶ On the topic of unconditional basic income in the context of development *politics* exists a vast range of literature. See for example Suplicy (2003), Hanlon (2004), Seekings (2005), and also Standing (2002).

⁷ See for example the advertisement of Prof. Götz Werner in the weekly journal “die Zeit”, 3 November 2005, p. 16.

⁸ See <http://www.grundeinkommen2005.org/>.

⁹ See for example the extensive reports and commentaries in the newspaper “die Presse”, 8 October 2005.

1. Economic Liberalism, Republicanisms and Basic Income

In the course of the rise of economic liberalism, political and scientific debates about civil society have focussed on factors society that divided society. Terms such as “class conflict” and “increasing individualism” have been frequent notions. Acting as a counterbalance to this revival of economic liberalism, however, a different strand of political thought emerged which put strong emphasis on social coherence. In the late 1980s, this republican (and partly communitarian) movement countered the triumph of economic liberalism and excessive individualism with a conception accentuating civic virtue and the common good. Aim was to establish a form of citizenry based on civic self-organisation and a social sense of responsibility. The reference to the ideal of the *polis* of the ancient world (a self-organising community of citizens) is obvious. This historically *other* than the economic-liberal conception of civil society produced a broad interest in the scientific community. It ties in with the classical theory of Aristotle, conceiving society as socio-political unity instead of defining civil society as market society of self-interested individuals as it is done in the economic-liberal perspective.

The aim of this chapter is to clarify what is meant by republicanism and to explore its relationship to the idea of an unconditional basic income. In order to explicate the notion of republicanism, I will present the model of economic liberalism as a stark contrast to two distinct republicanisms, neo-Athenian and neo-Roman republicanism. Being based on the latter, the conception of *modern republicanism* will be outlined and its link to the idea of a basic income will be discussed. When referring to economic liberalism and republicanism respectively, it is indispensable to foremost define and, especially in political philosophy, clarify the normative foundations of these conceptions. For the present purpose it suffices to briefly delineate the main features of both models by describing their respective conceptions of man, freedom, civil society and development.

1.1 Economic Liberalism

The conception of *economic liberalism*¹⁰ is rooted in the thoughts of philosophers like Thomas Hobbes and John Locke, just to name a few. Man is seen as a self-interested being striving for his or her individual advantage. He or she is a property owning citizen (*bourgeois*) following mainly an acquisitive life project. By aspiring to possess as much as possible, man defines himself through possessions: “I possess, therefore I am”. In this *possessive individual-*

¹⁰ Economic liberalism is to be distinguished from political liberalism, see for instance the conception of political liberalism by John Rawls (1993).

*ism*¹¹ man is “mutually disinterested”. There is no sense of moral community and thus social obligations are limited to business relations. Freedom is understood as the absence of interference.¹² Property rights are closely linked to this notion of freedom. The protection of property constitutes freedom. Ultimately, freedom means the protection of property in the sense of non-interference by others in one's property. The own obligation of man is to respect the property rights of others. In an economic-liberal civil society the market regulates social interactions, as the market is the only instrument allowing for purely voluntary actions. Rather than speaking of civil society, one can speak of “market society”. When individuals compete in the market, only the best wins, which is commonly accepted. Spheres of life that are not governed by the market principle are threatened by state regulation and thus freedom as non-interference is at stake. The state should be heavily restricted as he represents collective force and the use of coercion. It solely exists to protect the citizens from brute force and theft as well as to enforce contracts that allow free play to market relations in all aspects of life. Further governmental activities violate the rights of the citizens not to be coerced into doing something they would not do otherwise. In the economic-liberal view of civil society, state and society are disconnected. The aim of “good” development in economic liberalism is unlimited economic growth by means of an intensification of competition, which is seen as reducing interference and automatically resolving all social problems.

1.2 Neo-Athenian and Neo-Roman Republicanism

The model of economic liberalism has to be distinguished from *republican* perspectives. John Maynor distinguishes two related but distinct versions of republicanism.¹³

The *neo-Athenian version of republicanism* is based on Aristotle and civic humanism. It is often associated with communitarianism.¹⁴ In neo-Athenian republicanism, man is seen as a social or political animal intrinsically striving for political participation and showing a strong capability of self-government. Only within this self-governing republic, individuals can achieve excellence and live in freedom. Freedom is understood as contextually determined freedom within the scope of the ends of the community. Being truly free means participating freely in the self-governing of the community. To put it in a nutshell, this model of republicanism is based on the following basic idea: “I feel the spirit of community, therefore I am.” Democratic participation, civic virtue and citizenship are intrinsically valuable for the maintenance of freedom as they enable individuals to flourish within the polity as political beings,

¹¹ See MacPherson (1962).

¹² See Pettit (1997: 8-10) and Maynor (2003: 43-50), who associate freedom as non-interference with liberalism in general.

¹³ See Maynor (2003: 10-32).

¹⁴ Exponents of communitarianism are for example Sandel (1982) and Barber (1984).

which is their true and essential nature.¹⁵ State and community are indivisible. In this neo-Athenian model of republicanism, “participating in the institutions of a self-governing democratic polity will not only provide individuals with a particular form of liberty, it will also help them realize a high degree of self-mastery because it contributes to a rich formative project”¹⁶. According to Sandel's neo-Athenian-inspired conception of republicanism, citizen rights should be defined in light of the self-governing republic and not according to principles that are neutral among different conceptions of the good. Social progress in this perspective is seen as enhanced democratic rights, as an increase of communal independence with respect to the external world, and as an increasingly active civil society which is seen as a growing social capital.

In contrast to neo-Athenian republicanism, *neo-Roman republicanism* shows more moderation regarding individual flourishing and rather focuses on establishing institutional arrangements that guarantee individual freedom.¹⁷ Like the neo-Athenian model, the neo-Roman tradition stresses the importance of political participation and civic virtue. The *ci-toyens* take a share of the responsibility in order to ensure a just society of free and equal citizens. Their guiding principle is the following: “I participate in the *res publica*, therefore I am.” Yet, neo-Roman writers, especially Machiavelli, “conceived the world as made up of competing *humors*, or dispositions, that individuals wish to pursue”¹⁸. In contrast to neo-Athenian republicanism in which only one communal conception of the good is overarching, in neo-Roman republicanism individuals strive to pursue their own ends without interference of others. But they also desire the security to do so without risk. This security has to be guaranteed by the state – it is not possible to enjoy individual freedom in an unfree community. Civic virtue and the ability to place the common good above an individual's self-interest, then, are closely related to the maintenance of neo-Roman republican freedom. In other words, for a neo-Roman government “good” development means to “secure freedom for its people by promoting the common interest of the body politic while at the same time allowing individuals maximum liberty to pursue their own chosen ends”¹⁹.

¹⁵ See Maynor (2003: 10-11).

¹⁶ Maynor (2003: 10-11).

¹⁷ See Maynor (2003: 12).

¹⁸ Maynor (2003: 12).

¹⁹ Maynor (2003: 24).

1.3 *Modern Republicanism*

For Philipp Pettit und John Maynor, neo-Roman republicanism is the foundation of what they call *modern republicanism*.²⁰ According to this conception, individuals aim at avoiding anxiety and fear of natural and social threats. Given that individuals fear arbitrariness, they want to live in constant law-governed, predictable polities in which power is devolved. Thereby, as every individual has equal rights, the common good is the main criterion for established laws. Real inequalities between individuals, however, can cause confusion between individual self-interest and the common good. They seek basic laws and civic virtue that guarantee the realisation of the common goal of non-domination in order to ensure that anxiety does not re-emerge. They do this through the state that is their expression and that makes the common law.²¹ In contrast to the (economic) liberal conception of freedom as non-interference, freedom as non-domination is to be conceived as the absence of arbitrary interference. To outline this difference more precisely, interference means that an agent's activities or choices are subject to some form of intentional intervention by another agent, whereas domination occurs when an agent's activities or choices are subject to arbitrary interference by other agents.²² Agent A dominates agent B if (1) he has the capacity to interfere (2) on an arbitrary basis (3) in certain choices that the other is in a position to make.²³

The interference is arbitrary when A has the power to choose it or not at his pleasure, without reference to the interests or opinions of B.²⁴ Not only a particular act of arbitrary interference reduces the freedom of B, but also the capacity of A to interfere arbitrarily, whether he effectively interferes or not.²⁵ A slave who does not suffer any interference because of his master's benevolence is free in the (economic) liberal sense. But he is not free in the republican sense because there is always the possibility of arbitrary interference.

Instead, interference is not arbitrary (and thus not freedom-restricting) if agent A interferes with B in a way that is forced to track his interests and ideas. In this context, civic virtue is to be seen as the citizen's ability to pursue his own ends in a way that does not interfere arbitrarily with others by listening to others and acting in a manner that takes into upright consideration legitimate claims of others.²⁶ In this sense, civic virtue partly constitutes freedom as non-domination. And what is the role of governmental institutions? In an ideal world,

²⁰ See Pettit (1997) and Maynor (2003).

²¹ See Davidson (2005).

²² See Maynor (2003: 37).

²³ See Pettit (1997: 52).

²⁴ See Pettit (1997: 55).

²⁵ See Viroli (2002: 48).

²⁶ See Maynor (2003: 56-57). Discourse ethics is based on similar guiding principles; see for example Habermas (1984).

in which the will of the citizens was seriously taken into consideration in an approved manner by institutions with which they can identify, they are most likely not dominated by governmental institutions regardless of the outcome.²⁷ For example, public authorities like the parliament or the police officer interfere *ideally* in a non-dominating way, as there are suitably constraining constitutional arrangements so that they cannot interfere at will. Their actions may ideally be subject to appeal and review so that they are exposed to sanctions in the event of using their discretionary power in a dominating way.²⁸ Active political participation is an important requirement of *modern republicanism*. Ideal democratic governmental institutions thus constitute freedom as non-domination, too.

Republican freedom as non-domination is also closely linked to a specific normative notion of citizenship. The citizen is the basis of the political community. Political decisions can only be made with the underlying ideal of the citizen as an autonomous and self-reliant being in mind. The normatively understood status of citizenship in *modern republicanism* implies the guarantee of certain rights promoting individual autonomy in order to avoid domination by others. These rights are granted unconditionally, they do not depend on the fulfilment of any condition except that citizens have the duty to respect the corresponding rights of others. I argue that citizenship and thereby freedom as non-domination is especially put at risk by two factors, the market economy and not properly functioning governmental institutions. In the following, I will just briefly outline the relationships between citizenship and market economy as well as between citizenship and governmental institutions. They will be developed further in the next chapter.

On the one hand, freedom as non-domination is threatened by the market. Hence, the normative status of citizenship should persist independently of the respective contribution of the citizen to the economic process. As Lord Ralf Dahrendorf puts it:

“Citizenship is a social contract, generally valid for all members; work is a private contract. ... When the general rights of citizenship are made dependent on people entering into private relations of employment, these lose their private and fundamentally voluntary character. In an indirect but compelling manner, labour becomes forced labour. ... In principle the rights of citizenship are not conditional, but categorical. What citizenship offers does not depend on the readiness of people to pay a price in the private domain. Citizenship cannot be marketed.”²⁹

²⁷ See Maynor (2003: 39).

²⁸ See Pettit (1997: 65).

²⁹ Dahrendorf (1996: 33).

Michael Walzer argues in line with Dahrendorf by noting that “economic failure ... should never have the effect of devaluing citizenship, in either the legal or social sense. And if it does have that effect, we must seek for remedies.”³⁰ The market is not a less important sphere of citizenship than the polity.³¹

On the other hand, it is important to emphasise that citizenship could also be derogated by governmental institutions. Citizenship as non-domination also implies no arbitrary dependency from governmental institutions. Governmental institutions hold the exclusive right to make use of force. The existential fortune of citizens may depend on governmental decisions. There is a broad area of administrative discretion. Citizens may consider themselves rather as objects of governmental decisions and not as autonomous subjects. Since governments may wield power in a dominating way, citizenship is generally threatened by governmental institutions. As was mentioned above, however, ideally functioning republican institutional arrangements ensure freedom as non-domination.

It can be stated that citizenship plays an important role in granting republican freedom as non-domination. It is linked to certain rights that ensure autonomy against arbitrary interference of the market as well as governmental power. Citizenship helps avoiding that an individual is dominated in the sense that another agent has the power to prescribe how he or she is to lead his or her life. In this sense, citizenship constitutes freedom as non-domination.

1.4 Basic Income and Modern Republican Freedom as Non-Domination

Modern republicanism thus involves securing individuals from domination and thus civic virtue, ideally functioning governmental institutions and a normative status of citizenship are required. The ideal of freedom as non-domination implies that no agent has the potential to interfere arbitrarily and that agents generally act according to the abovementioned norms of civic virtue. Having said this, the question arises: are these republican claims somewhat linked to the guarantee of an unconditional basic income?

Daniel Raventós and David Casassas³² refer to Pettit's assertion that “if a republican state is committed to advancing the cause of freedom as non-domination among its citizens, then it must embrace a policy of promoting socioeconomic independence”³³. Firstly, the lack of resources for doing something limits the available extent of undominated choice. Socioeconomic independence will facilitate undominated choices or reduce their cost. Secondly and more importantly, socioeconomic independence is a safeguard against domination that eco-

³⁰ Walzer (1983: 106).

³¹ See Zelleke (2005: 645).

³² See Raventós/Casassas (2005: 233).

³³ Pettit (1997: 158-159).

nomical dependent agents would otherwise have to endure.³⁴ For example, an individual is forced to be successful in the tight labour market. If the individual does not comply with the “necessities of the market”, his or her job and thus his or her means of existence are at stake. Employers may take advantage of this dependence by interfering arbitrarily into the individual's choices (excessive demands, exploitation). Or suppose a woman being mistreated by her husband. Socioeconomic independence would enable her to leave him or to establish a relationship in which both partners have the same rights.³⁵

Furthermore, Pettit argues that governmental welfare institutions should foster socioeconomic independence in a non-dominating way. This implies that it is not given as a charitable and paternalistic gift (poor-relief) that may be withdrawn at whim, but as a right.³⁶ Otherwise the beneficiaries would get increasingly dependent of discretionary decisions of governmental welfare bureaucracies. Being subject to foreign discretionary decisions that adjudicate whether they are “worth” it or not, beneficiaries fear arbitrary interference.

Modern republican civic virtue, as mentioned above, implies the deliberate and upright consideration of legitimate claims of others. Thereby, arbitrary interference and thus domination is prevented. As discussed before, individuals need certain basic goods in order to secure (material) existence. In case these resources are not fully guaranteed, individuals will be coerced to do everything in their power to obtain them. This may imply “accepting” being dominated by others. But it also may imply “accepting” that others are dominated. Being forced to ensure the necessary means of existence leads to dependencies that derogate civic virtue. In Republicanism, the function of property is to ensure that individuals are not involved in such dependencies that finally lead to corruption and put at risk the functioning of the republic.³⁷ *Modern republican* civic virtue necessitates individual freedom of action and independence. Material independence is a condition for civic virtue.³⁸

In order to ensure the principle of non-domination, the citizen status of every person has to be equally ensured in economic life by means of appropriate basic rights. Every economically active citizen (i.e. every citizen liable for taxation in a specific country) is granted certain economic-citizen rights. According to the civic guiding principle, public benefits should be linked to citizenship. Every citizen (and not only jobholders) should be unconditionally entitled to certain benefits. The unconditional basic income can be seen as such an economic-citizen right. It undoubtedly strengthens the concepts of citizenship and civic virtue. It helps

³⁴ See Pettit (1997: 158-160).

³⁵ See for example Patry (2005: 31-32, 37-38).

³⁶ See Pettit (1997: 162).

³⁷ See Pocock (1993: 45-49).

³⁸ See Raventós/Casassas (2005: 235-242).

to reasonably embed the economy in civil society. Granting an income unconditionally complies with the socio-economic requirements of citizenship and civic virtue that constitute freedom as non-domination. In this view, the universalisation of citizenship requires the universalisation of property.³⁹

Socioeconomic independence is an important requirement for freedom as non-domination. *Modern republicanism* especially aims at avoiding individual dependence from charity and from the possibility of arbitrary interference by employers. Indubitably, the introduction of an unconditional basic income would guarantee as well as universalize a considerable degree of socioeconomic independence and thus conduce to the republican freedom as non-domination.⁴⁰

2. Republicanism in Switzerland and its Development Potential

The republican thought tradition played an important role in history. The historian John G.A. Pocock described the history and transmission of the early republican strand from Florentine political thought over the political discussions since mid 17th century in England to the American Revolution.⁴¹ A language of “civic humanism” and “republicanism” developed and provided linguistic categories for the ideal of self-governing communities ruled by economically independent and politically active citizens.

Freedom and stability of the community depend on the virtue of its citizens requiring the subordination of the individual's self-interest to the common good. Accordingly, republics are especially vulnerable to the decline of civic virtue. Corruption and decadence characterise this *machiavellian moment*⁴², in which citizens choose their own interest over the common good. Since the eighteenth century and the emergence of a commercialised market society that increasingly referred to individual self-interest, the decline of republican ideals has begun. Republicanism is seen as a purely defensive line of thought. Being anti-individualistic and anti-capitalistic it was only concerned with the conservation of the status quo.⁴³ Since commerce ultimately stands for unbridled egoism and thus for political indifference, for Pocock, commerce and civic virtue are conflictive and incompatible.

³⁹ See Raventós/Casassas (2005: 238, 250).

⁴⁰ See also Raventós/Casassas (2005: 242-244).

⁴¹ See Pocock (2003a).

⁴² According to Pocock (2003a: viii) [1975] this is “(...) the moment in conceptualized time in which the republic was seen as confronting its own temporal finitude, as attempting to remain morally and politically stable in a stream of irrational events conceived as essentially destructive of all systems of secular stability. (...) this was spoken of as the confrontation of 'virtue' with 'fortune' and 'corruption'.” Later, Pocock (2003b: 307) refers to the moment in history at which a “republic of equal citizens, enjoying the ancient liberty of ruling and being ruled” is “perceived as precarious, threatened either by internal contradictions or by contingent historical circumstances”.

⁴³ See Weinmann (2002: 13-14).

This chapter aims at outlining the specific Swiss republican tradition and its relationship to the abovementioned republicanisms. It should be mentioned, however, that it is difficult to use the term in the sense of a consistent Swiss tradition. In fact, one should rather distinguish between different republicanisms in Switzerland. The republican tradition of Berne differs from the one of Zurich. However, I will try to briefly reveal common features of the Swiss republicanisms, which I will subsume with the term of Swiss republicanism. It will further be explained what is meant by the “development potential of Swiss republicanism” and what respective role played the *machiavellian moment* in Switzerland.

2.1 The Swiss Republican Tradition

Since the middle ages Switzerland has featured the oldest and most durable republican tradition in Europe. Swiss history can be read as one of fiercely independent communal groups. They were allied with equally autonomous-oriented city states, which created a league not so much to conquer new territories as to safeguard their independence against neighbouring powers, mainly the Habsburg Empire and French hereditary rulers.⁴⁴ “The specialty of the Habsburgs and French was personal rule, while the specialty of the Swiss was republicanism and a deeply ingrained distrust of personal power.”⁴⁵ Thus in Swiss communities strong bottom-up self-governing polities developed in which individuals participated actively.

The political republican developments in Switzerland were paid considerable attention by foreign thinkers. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, for instance, in “Contrat Social” (1762), sees “in the happiest country in all the world, groups of peasants deciding the affairs of State beneath an oak-tree, and behaving with a constancy of wisdom”⁴⁶. According to Machiavelli (1531), the Swiss “are the only people who still live as the ancients did, being uncorrupted in both their religion and their military service”⁴⁷. He considers the Swiss the freest people in Europe as there were no feudal lords and rentiers who exploited the citizens. He perceived the Swiss military republics as meritocratic, united and able to maintain equality amongst their citizens.⁴⁸ Moreover, in his “Wealth of Nations” (1776), Adam Smith observed an expression of civic virtue and mutual confidence in Switzerland. It shows that citizens identified with (their) republic being an active member of it:

⁴⁴ See Frenkel (1993: 63).

⁴⁵ Frenkel (1993: 63).

⁴⁶ Rousseau (1799: 269).

⁴⁷ Machiavelli, cited in Kapossy (2002: 229). For a critical appraisal of Machiavelli's elucidations on Switzerland see Reinhardt (1995).

⁴⁸ See Kapossy (2002: 230).

“The canton of Unterwald in Switzerland is frequently ravaged by storms and inundations, and is thereby exposed to extraordinary expenses. Upon such occasions the people assemble, and every one is said to declare with the greatest frankness what he is worth in order to be taxed accordingly. At Zurich the law orders that, in cases of necessity, every one should be taxed in proportion to his revenue; the amount of which he is obliged to declare upon oath. They have no suspicion, it is said, that any of their fellow-citizens will deceive them. At Basel the principal revenue of the state arises from a small custom upon goods exported. All the citizens make oath that they will pay every three months all the taxes imposed by the law. All merchants and even all innkeepers are trusted with keeping themselves the account of the goods which they sell either within or without the territory. ... It is not suspected that the revenue suffers by this confidence. To oblige every citizen to declare publicly upon oath the amount of his fortune must not, it seems, in those Swiss cantons be reckoned a hardship.”⁴⁹

Moreover, Swiss republicanism is related to communalism. To this day, it is not the nation-state through which the citizen is bound to community, but rather through the commune on a local level. Swiss citizens consider themselves rather as members of a commune than of the nation. The commune is the foundational unit of Swiss politics. Communes still confer citizenship, a power that reflects the ingrained bottom-up quality of Swiss democracy. This communalism can be seen as a communal tradition based on communal autonomy, civic rights and duties and a corporate entitlement of the individual to participation.⁵⁰ It is to be seen as a deliberate alternative to feudalism.

Since the eighteenth century, one of the most “successful” civil societies affecting state and society has developed in Switzerland.⁵¹ Civil society existed even before the modern state. With the Swiss Constitution of 1848, the Swiss federal-state was ultimately founded by the union of two dozen small republics. This liberal revolution initiated by the “progressive” middle class emerged in the two radical protestant cities of Zurich and Geneva. Every Swiss citizen was given certain rights. This radical constitution put Switzerland in the position of being the most democratic country in Europe.⁵²

I argue that the Swiss republican tradition can be seen as an idiosyncratic model that incorporates elements of both neo-Athenian and neo-Roman republicanism. On the one hand, it implies strong self-governing communities that are characterised by a spirit of community and a feeling of togetherness that should not be violated by individual citizens. Benjamin Barber even states that “in Switzerland, freedom has been understandable only within the context of

⁴⁹ Smith (1976: 850-851). Interestingly, still Swiss citizens betimes consent to national tax increases at referendums, even though they would not benefit individually. For Swiss top managers, though, it indeed seems to be reckoned a hardship to declare publicly the amount of their fortune.

⁵⁰ See Weinmann (2002: 19).

⁵¹ See for example Hettling (1998) and Tanner (1995).

⁵² Steinberg (1996: 173).

community”⁵³. On the other hand, this freedom is understood as freedom from external domination which is to be linked to the abovementioned distrust of personal power. Within community, then, individuals are granted civic rights and corresponding duties accentuating the pursuit of individually chosen ends. Despite these similarities, the Swiss model of republicanism is neither directly rooted in ancient Greek nor in ancient Rome, but rather stems from a medieval tradition of communal self-government and corporate self-organisation.⁵⁴

2.2 *The Machiavellian Moment of Swiss Republicanism?*

The question arises about the *machiavellian moment* of Swiss republicanism. Traditionally, the history of Swiss society between 1750 and 1850 is seen in terms of a great transition from republicanism to liberalism, from a contained moral economy to a “modern” market economy.⁵⁵ Barbara Weinmann, however, convincingly argues that, unlike other republicanism, Swiss republicanism showed a remarkable potential of modernisation as the acquisitive jobholder society rose in late eighteenth and nineteenth century.⁵⁶ It was not a defensive, isolationist or anti-individualistic thought tradition but Swiss republicanism was rather capable to reconcile civic virtue and egoistic economic impulses of a commercialising society. This development potential of Swiss republicanism stems from a synthesis of two medieval traditions of political thought: a republican tradition extended by (enlightened) rational law and a communalist tradition capable of modernisation. In both traditions there was an emphasis on the ideal that rulers and “to be ruled” form an identity. By this, it was possible to couple individual acquisitiveness with the community and thus with municipal and corporate values.⁵⁷ In the course of time, then, the communalist model could be extended from its narrow communal frame to the federal state. With the nationwide introduction of individual direct democratic rights and at the same time the strengthening of governmental regulation in 1869, the communal-republican tradition was modernised and restored on state level. Like Weinmann, Kapossy stresses that it was only Swiss republicanism that managed to transform itself to a *commercial republicanism*: “Switzerland has been the only sustained European experiment in the development of a *modern republican political economy*”⁵⁸.

In Switzerland, the emancipation of the modern *citoyen* from feudal dependencies cannot be separated from the economic striving for independence of the early *bourgeoisie*. The business sense of the *bourgeois* was allied to the political civic sense of the *citoyen*. The mid-

⁵³ Barber (1974: 11).

⁵⁴ See for example Sewing (1993: 16-18), Hostenstein (1999: 127) or Weinmann (2002: 29-74).

⁵⁵ See Kapossy (2000: 299), emphasis added.

⁵⁶ See Weinmann (2002).

⁵⁷ See Weinmann (2002: 354, 358).

⁵⁸ See Kapossy (2000: 299-303, here: 303).

dle-class supported the state because they understood that only the state was capable of warranting their civil rights.⁵⁹ Guaranteeing these civil rights was an explicit duty of the state. In the second half of the nineteenth century, economy, state and society were heavily influenced by the middle-class. For the middle-class and its representatives, economy, politics and state were one, and not separable spheres.⁶⁰

As described by the historian Gordon A. Craig, a liberal culture that combined affluence and materialism with cultural diversity emerged.⁶¹ Swiss political thinking in this period, according to Craig, can be characterised as a liberalism that linked responsibility for the common good to a maximum of reference to the pursuit of individually chosen ends.⁶²

As was mentioned above, the idiosyncratic Swiss republican tradition includes elements of both neo-Athenian and neo-Roman republicanism. I make the case, however, that as a result of its development in late eighteenth and nineteenth century, Swiss republicanism drew nearer to neo-Roman republicanism. As was shown, the importance of pursuing individually chosen ends was increasingly emphasised. Due to its development potential, Swiss republicanism was able to incorporate acquisitive individualism and transformed itself into a *commercial republicanism*; it was a *modern republican political economy* that prevailed in Switzerland. Further, I argue that Swiss republicanism bears considerable affinity to freedom as non-domination. The strong desire not to be dominated can be traced in the history of Swiss republicanism. This ingrained attitude can be exemplified by the fear of being subordinated to feudal lords, the communal tradition of self-governing communities and the distrust of personal power in terms of political as well as economic dependencies. In this sense, Swiss republicanism bears similarities to the model of *modern republicanism*.

However, in the course of the increasing industrialisation of the economy towards the end of the nineteenth century, the social question was raised in Switzerland, too. *Laissez-faire* economic liberalism with high economic growth did not solve the social problems. Unemployment, poverty and thus class conflict became severe societal problems. Henceforth, the growing working class movement achieved socio-political reforms *against* the middle-class. Facing the dilemma of having to choose between the indivisible claim of its republican-liberal civic emancipation project and its own particular economic interests, the middle-class decided for the latter. A vulgar economic liberalism impaired the enlightened Swiss republicanism. The “liberal-minded” middle-class changed from a socially progressive to a conservative

⁵⁹ See Ulrich (2005: 15).

⁶⁰ Tanner (1995: 496).

⁶¹ See Craig (1988: 13). According to Craig, this holds true especially for the canton of Zurich, at this time one of the most powerful cantons in Switzerland.

⁶² See Craig (1988: 285).

force abandoning its emancipatory project of republican freedom (that is a society of free and equal citizens), to the working-class movement and social democracy.⁶³ Was this, later than in other European nations, the ultimate *machiavellian moment* of Swiss republicanism, the “death of communal liberty”⁶⁴? Was this “affluent world of privatistic materialism secured by power, guided by competitive self-interest and protected by law”⁶⁵ definitely inhospitable to Swiss republicanism?

There is evidence that, to this day, there are still traces of the Swiss republican tradition in Swiss political thinking. By virtue of its abovementioned development potential, Swiss republicanism persisted. There is still an active individual political participation in the polity. Deeply rooted self-administration and a limited governmental bureaucracy help to strengthen citizenship and the citizens' capability to participate politically. Switzerland has a civil society, in which the status of citizenship is not merely coupled to the status as jobholder, but to all citizens. Direct democracy plays an important role in political life. This is further facilitated by the fact that Switzerland still possesses one of the most decentralized governmental structures in the western world. Switzerland is divided into twenty-six cantons retaining considerably more power than its federal apparatus. The three thousand communes remain even more autonomous than the cantons themselves. To this day, there is a considerable disposition for non-personalised government in Switzerland. For example, decisions of government bodies are considered to be taken by the board as a whole. The members are expected not to tell publicly whether they approved the measure or not.

3. Linking Swiss Republicanism to Basic Income

As was highlighted above, Swiss republicanism bears considerable affinity to *modern republicanism* and its concept of freedom as non-domination. The history of Swiss republicanism can be read as a struggle against domination. Swiss republicanism, then, possesses a development potential that enabled it to persist to this day. The Swiss republican tradition was able to persist and to adapt to social, political and economic change. Further, I argued, that since basic income fosters socioeconomic independence, it may be justified on *modern republican* grounds. At this point, I make the case that it is possible to establish a relationship between Swiss republicanism and the idea of an unconditional basic income.

In this chapter, I will present two distinct examples that help to corroborate my thesis. The first example ties in with the abovementioned communal roots of Swiss republicanism. It

⁶³ See Ulrich (2005: 16) and Craig (1988: 259-285).

⁶⁴ Barber (1974).

⁶⁵ Barber (1974: 274).

is about a still persisting republican tradition that includes the disbursement of an income that is quite similar to a basic income. The second example deals with Swiss social policy and its links to the idea of an unconditional basic income.

3.1 Citizen Commune and Citizen Benefit in Switzerland

As was mentioned above, Swiss citizens are not bound to the community through the nation-state, but through the commune. In Switzerland, rather than as members of the nation, citizens consider themselves as members of a commune. Every resident of a commune is member of the *residential commune* (*Einwohnergemeinde*), which is the primary political unit of cantonal politics. Besides the *residential commune*, there is the so-called *citizen commune* (*Bürgergemeinde*). This specific communal citizenship remains within the family and its descendants, even if they have been living elsewhere for several generations. Membership in a *citizen commune* is either passed on through ancestry or given through naturalisation.

The *citizen commune* originates from the association of small villages in the middle-ages. The aim was to regulate the common use of feedlot and woods.⁶⁶ Every member of the *citizen commune* was entitled to make use of this *citizen estate* (*Bürgergut*). This claim was increasingly related to civil rights. Every citizen could assert it only because of his or her citizenship within the *citizen commune*.⁶⁷ Hence, the civil right to the disbursement of the so-called *citizen benefit* (*Bürgernutzen*) was established. The revenue (or a part of it) of the cultivation of the *citizen estate* was dispensed annually to every resident citizen in monetary form or in kind. Originally, it was mostly a claim to use the land and wood of the commune.⁶⁸ In the course of time, insofar as there was no need for them, these goods were replaced by monetary benefits.⁶⁹ The *citizen commune* defined the circumstances of the disbursement. Mostly the modalities were decided on by the open council of the *citizen commune*. As a result, every of the approximately two thousand *citizen communes* in Switzerland had different rules. Depending on the agreed regulation, the disbursement of the *citizen benefit* was partly coupled to a “reciprocated activity” such as the duty to help lumbering. However, with a certain payment, it was possible to get the *citizen benefit* without having to fulfil this duty.⁷⁰ The amount of the *citizen benefit* was sometimes also dependent of the marital status. In the canton of

⁶⁶ See Carlen (1988: 9) and Keller (1937: 7).

⁶⁷ See Keller (1937: 27-31, 63-65).

⁶⁸ See Keller (1937: 70).

⁶⁹ See Keller (1937: 73-76).

⁷⁰ See Keller (1937: 72-73).

Aargau for instance, married individuals got a higher *citizen benefit* than celibate citizens.⁷¹ Interestingly, no functional connection was seen between the *citizen benefit* and poor relief.⁷²

To this day, the significance of the *citizen commune* and the *citizen benefit* has gradually declined. The very existence of the *citizen commune* “as a vehicle of traditional sentiment for autonomy and self-government”⁷³ is threatened. Some cantons have even abolished the *citizen benefit* in their communes and some *citizen communes* ceased giving it. But still, about forty percent of the Swiss woods are in possession of *citizen communes*, and more importantly in this context, in numerous *citizen communes* the *citizen benefit* is still disbursed annually to all resident citizens. Today's *citizen benefits* are considerably lower than centuries ago. Nowadays they have rather symbolic force. Partly, they are in kind (for example some wood or a dinner), partly in monetary form.

The *citizen commune* of *Visp* (canton of *Valais*) for example, grants every resident citizen older than eighteen years an annual unconditional *citizen benefit* of sixty Swiss Francs (about forty Euros), those younger receive forty Swiss Francs (twenty-seven Euros). In addition to this monetary benefit, citizens of *Visp* are invited to join a yearly free convivial day trip in the region (also considered as a part of the *citizen benefit*). Similarly, *Bischofszell* (canton of *Thurgau*) yearly distributes to every resident citizen older than sixteen years a traditional sausage, wine and bread as *citizen benefit*. The importance people attach to the deeply rooted *citizen benefit* today is reflected in the fact that these traditions are still persisting and that the *citizen benefit* is often disbursed on communal festivals.

I would argue that the *citizen benefit* can be seen as a strong link between Swiss republicanism and the idea of an unconditional basic income. Admittedly, the *citizen benefit* corresponded historically rather to a conditional basic income. As mentioned before, it was the open council's responsibility to decide on this matter. Therefore, every *citizen commune* has its own rules.

But more importantly, current customs in Switzerland show that in numerous *citizen communes* (like in *Visp*) the *citizen benefit* corresponds quite closely to the idea of an unconditional basic income as defined above. The *citizen commune* is a political community, which disburses the *citizen benefit* individually and unconditionally to its members. The only difference to Van Parijs's definition of a basic income is that the *citizen benefit* is only paid to those members of the *citizen commune* who virtually live in the commune. Thus, today, in most communes only about fifteen percent of the population are citizens of the respective *citizen*

⁷¹ See Keller (1937: 79).

⁷² See Keller (1937: 50).

⁷³ Barber (1974: 220).

commune. Because of increased mobility, it is usual that citizens of a commune are born and grow up in a different commune than their original *citizen commune*. Most citizens of the commune do not reside there (anymore). This is also the main reason why the *citizen benefit* has been heavily criticised. In former times, the *citizen benefit* has fuelled debates that are similar to present-day discussions about basic income. In 1869 for instance, at a conference of the Swiss Lawyer Society, the *citizen benefit* was accused of encouraging “inactivity and work-shyness” as it was “a rent without employment”⁷⁴. Another author posed the question why the community cannot give a gained surplus to its citizens in form of the *citizen benefit*, instead of always claiming from the citizens.⁷⁵

The tradition of disbursing the *citizen benefit* can be traced back to ancient Swiss communalist and republican customs. In the context of my thesis, it is important to consider it as a still existing form of an unconditional basic income in Switzerland. Even though heavily criticised, the *citizen benefit* transformed and persisted in a different setting.

3.2 Linking Basic Income to Swiss Social Policy

The Swiss welfare state developed comparatively late.⁷⁶ This is due to the dominant position of civil society in Switzerland. Its distinctive individual and societal self-administration slowed down the emergence and the growth of social security systems.⁷⁷ However, the development of the modern Swiss welfare state cannot only be seen as an advancement of existing safety nets within communes. It was also an answer to the increasing wage-dependence of the individual.⁷⁸ Only since the 1960s/1970s, civil social arrangements were slowly but increasingly substituted by governmental social policy.⁷⁹ Switzerland was gradually changing from a *welfare society* to a *welfare state* with a large and growing public sector.⁸⁰ Nevertheless, governmental socio-political measures were still aligned with the image of the autonomous, economically active citizen.⁸¹

The Swiss pension system is worth noting. It consists of the so-called *three pillars*. The *first pillar* provides universal coverage. It is a compulsory contribution-financed basic rent that on its own almost secures modest existence of virtually *every* Swiss retiree. The *first pillar* of the Swiss pension system is based on the status of citizenship and not only on the status of previous employment. Those who did not work as employee before are also entitled to con-

⁷⁴ Keller (1937: 98). Own translation.

⁷⁵ See Carlen (1988: 26).

⁷⁶ See Studer (1998: 180).

⁷⁷ See Hettling (1998: 234, 245) and Cattacin/Tattini (2002: 810).

⁷⁸ See Studer (1998: 164).

⁷⁹ See Cattacin/Tattini (2002: 810-811).

⁸⁰ See Armingeon (2001: 145).

⁸¹ See Hettling (1998: 234).

tribute and benefit from the *first pillar*. They contribute a yearly fix minimum amount. Depending on contribution period and the previous income, the disbursed *first pillar* rent amounts to approximately 600 Euros (minimum) and 1200 Euros (maximum) per month. As the relation of minimum to maximum pension is one to two, and contributions are strictly linear with income, the scheme is deliberately redistributive.⁸² For most elder Swiss citizen, this pillar is the most important source of income.⁸³ It can be seen as a citizenship-based old-age basic income for all Swiss retirees.

In the *second pillar*, the occupational pension, benefits and contributions are linear with income. The *third pillar* consists of tax-deductible savings, favourable to medium-to-high income groups.⁸⁴

After long political debates between respective representatives of public and private retirement arrangements, the latter finally accepted the introduction of the *first pillar* in 1947. Their aim of “achieving social progress without etatisation” did not conflict with the idea of the *first pillar* any longer. It was no longer perceived as rival of private provisions, but as solid foundation for their development.⁸⁵ In other words, the *first pillar* was considered as a socioeconomic requirement for a legitimate expansion of private provisions. Only after the status of citizenship has been ensured by the *first pillar*, it was possible to open the market for private pensions. The status of citizenship is undoubtedly strengthened by the *first pillar* of the Swiss pension system. Based on this solid citizenship-based foundation, private provisions (e.g. the second and third pillar) could evolve. In the end, an astonishing majority of about eighty percent of the voters accepted the *first pillar* at the referendum in the year 1947. The *first pillar* of the Swiss retirement system can be seen as a specific Swiss pre-form of an unconditional basic income. It is based on the republican tradition emphasising the socioeconomic requirements of citizenship. To a certain degree, it universalises property and thus citizenship. It is worth mentioning that in view of demographic change, the part of Swiss citizens who are entitled to benefit is increasing. In the long run, this could lead to a broader introduction of such a contribution-financed basic income through the backdoor.

Today, the *first pillar* is considered being one of the most important achievements of 20th century Swiss domestic politics. It is a constant reference point in the discussion about the further development of the Swiss welfare state. Even in other countries, the *first pillar* of

⁸² See Armingeon (2001: 149-150).

⁸³ See Wechsler (2004: 220).

⁸⁴ See Armingeon (2001: 150).

⁸⁵ See Leimgruber (2002: 315).

the Swiss pension system is perceived as a pathbreaking social policy, as shows the example of a recent OECD-study.⁸⁶

At the theoretical level of social policy, the question arises, to which of Gøsta Esping-Andersen's three types of welfare regimes⁸⁷ Switzerland belongs. For a long time, Switzerland has been considered as a “*liberal*” or *residual* welfare regime.⁸⁸ Constitutive characteristics of this regime type are means-tested social welfare, low universal social transfers and a high degree of free market-oriented policies. But as public welfare expenditure has been heavily increasing in Switzerland since the 1980s, it can no longer be described as a *liberal* welfare regime with a minimised welfare state. Neither a social-democratic state-centrism, nor a conservative corporatism or a “*liberal*” market ideology prevailed in Swiss social policy. Hence, German sociologist Michael Opielka recently proposed to add a fourth welfare regime to Esping-Andersen's typology: the so-called *guarantistic welfare regime* (*garantistisches Wohlfahrtsregime*).⁸⁹ This regime is characterised by rights-based and universal arrangements. Socio-political rights and duties draw upon the republican status of citizenship (and not upon the status of employment). All citizens possess the basic right to participate in all social security systems. According to Opielka, Swiss social policy corresponds to a *soft guarantism* (*weicher Garantismus*) because of its exceptionally strong citizenship-oriented and rights-based social security system.⁹⁰ Both, the abovementioned *first pillar* of the Swiss pension system as well as the health insurance system (with its non-risk-equivalent individual premiums) exhibit features of Swiss *soft guarantism*.⁹¹ Yet, in other fields of social policy (for example labour market or family policy), Switzerland is still partly attached to the “*liberal*” doctrine.

The *soft guarantism* in Swiss social policy is linked to Swiss republicanism. Rights-based, universal social policy arrangements bear on universal citizenship and the ideal of non-domination. Such arrangements help to prevent that neither the market nor the state are in a position that allows the possibility of arbitrary interference. The *first pillar* of the Swiss pension system and *Swiss guarantism* in general are strongly related to the idea of an unconditional basic income.

⁸⁶ See Queisser/Whitehouse (2003). In Germany, there are even suggestions coming up that pension reform should be oriented at the Swiss model; see for example Blasche (1998: 147) and Opielka (2004b).

⁸⁷ See Esping-Andersen (1990).

⁸⁸ See for example Esping-Andersen (1990), Cattacin/Tattini (2002: 812) and Armingeon (2001: 145).

⁸⁹ See Opielka (2004a: 48-57).

⁹⁰ See Carigiet/Opielka (2006).

⁹¹ See Opielka (2004a: 163-164, 196-199), Carigiet/Opielka (2006: 24).

Conclusion and Perspectives

The aim of the present paper was to establish a relationship between the idea of an unconditional basic income and republican thought in normative political philosophy in general and the Swiss republican tradition in particular. My argument is based on a justification of basic income on grounds of *modern republicanism* and its underlying conception of freedom as non-domination. I made the case that Switzerland is endowed with a republican tradition in which the notion of freedom as non-domination plays a crucial role. The history of Swiss republicanism can be seen as a struggle against domination, in which direct democracy, communalism and citizenship played an important role by constituting liberty. Further, I argued that Swiss republicanism bears a considerable development potential by virtue of which it could adapt to social, political and economic change. In the course of the late eighteenth and nineteenth century, Swiss republicanism was able to incorporate acquisitive individualism, and, more importantly, the ideal of autonomy in the pursuit of individual ends. Thus, in contemporary Swiss political thinking, this transformed Swiss republicanism still plays an important role. Because of its affinity to republican freedom as non-domination that justifies basic income, I consider Swiss republicanism to be related to the idea of an unconditional basic income. This thesis was corroborated by two factors. The republican tradition of disbursing the *citizen benefit* in Swiss *citizen communes* constitutes a still practised custom that has remarkable similarities to an unconditional basic income grant. Furthermore, in Swiss social policy, the citizenship-based *first pillar* of the current Swiss pension system bears considerable resemblance to the basic income idea. It can be seen as a contribution-financed basic income security for every Swiss retired citizen, independent of his previous employment status. On the level of welfare regime research, one can even speak of a rights-based, universal *soft guarantism* that prevails in Swiss social policy.

Having said this, I argue that the gradual introduction of an unconditional basic income would correspond to another step in the development of Swiss republicanism. The labour market gradually loses its function as main source of a guaranteed income. It is no longer able to integrate all citizens. Unemployment, labour insecurity and precarious working conditions increasingly pose severe social problems in Switzerland. More and more individuals are becoming dependent on means-tested social benefits. In view of these developments, basic income is to be understood as a valid Swiss republican alternative to existing policies.

A public discourse about the idea of an unconditional basic income has not yet developed in Switzerland. However, in order to inspire discourse, the link to Swiss republicanism could be emphasised. Still there is much social progress to be realised in Switzerland. The

pathway to the introduction of an unconditional basic income has begun in Swiss traditions already centuries ago. The prospect of further “good” development in the sense of republican freedom as non-domination in Switzerland should tie in with Switzerland's own past and tradition.

Switzerland is not likely to be the first country introducing an unconditional basic income. Its federalist grassroots democracy grants extensive political participation rights to the citizens. Important improvements take a long time to be accepted by the citizens. However, important socio-political innovations have often started in Switzerland at the cantonal or even communal level. It would be challenging to see what effects the gradual introduction of an unconditional basic income on such a local level would have, especially with its link to Swiss republicanism in mind. Switzerland is an affluent country. It is time to steer towards social progress instead of striving for unlimited economic growth at the cost of citizenship.

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