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A universal unconditional basic income (UUBI) and open borders

Authoritarian trends are currently on the rise, including shutting out refugees and other immigrants. The ideals of human rights which lead to a demand for a UUBI are universalistic and thus incompatible with the exclusion of people. In particular, those who so far have been excluded are those most in need of UUBI to achieve a decent living. A human rights-oriented policy must not commit itself neither

- neoliberally – to opening borders without social security, nor
- social-nationalistically – to providing social security within the closed nation state.

This contrasts with two objections to open borders when introducing a UUBI:

1. A regionally limited (e.g., national), generous UUBI leads to increased immigration of net recipients of UUBI, which can jeopardize the funding of the UUBI.
2. The immigration of individuals hostile to freedom, and the proliferation of parallel societies that hold conservative values, could jeopardize a freedom-affirming and UUBI-advocating community consensus.

Both arguments suggest that there could be a trade-off between open borders and UUBI. However, a human rights policy must adhere to both objectives and work to reconcile them. There are circumstances suggesting that this can be achieved.

The two tendencies described in the objections do not happen that fast, so that even at a regional level, steps towards UUBI remain possible.

A repressive and exclusionary homeland security policy would intensify existing authoritarian and anti-human trends and thus jeopardize the social conditions of the basic income at least as much as immigration would. Open UUBI societies enable civilizing experiences of freedom, which are then carried back to the refugees' countries of origin and help improve conditions there. This would be a feedback of an uncompromisingly generous welcome policy on the causes of flight, with the long-term consequence that less hardship will force fewer people to flee.