Reciprocity and Basic Income

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The Reciprocity Problem

• Reciprocity problem is the chief ethical objection to basic income

• Parasitism: A is a parasite to B if the economic relationship between A and B makes A better off and B worse off

• Basic income violates reciprocity in distributive justice by making parasitic economic relationships possible

• One solution is to make a basic income scheme conditional
The Social Product

• Parasitism involves receiving the benefits of the social product without making any contribution to it

• Narrow view of social product: quantitative measures such as GDP and GNP

• Broader view of social product: combined goods and services in a wide sense
Capabilities and Contribution

• Capability approach to human development is a useful way of thinking about the concept of the social product

• Contributive activity is engaging in capability-promoting behaviour

• Wide range of activities can count as reciprocating the material support of basic income
Conditionality and Basic Income

• Reciprocity should not be jettisoned in defending basic income

• Ethical conditionality and political unconditionality

• Example of universal health care