To create a liberal normative system, like a human rights-based democracy, would first require an antecedent norm that accounts for the creation of the system's members, as well as all of the power or influence they could exert upon one another. That norm would precede and be necessary to legitimate all subsequent norms, including things like the property claims that are the foundation of modern economies. For many reasons that norm does not exist in the world today, may have never existed, and its absence may account for the key conundrum in liberalism today: The average person in the world has little influence over the things that influence them, like climate change and other environmental crises, global markets, risk of nuclear war, etc. How is that possible in an era defined by the supposed rise of human rights and democracy, which by any interpretation, were meant to empower individuals, and make them self-determining?

The missing antecedent norm, or grundnorm (contra Kelsen), could hold the key to solving the conundrum and ensuring the political evolution of a dynamic balance between community and autonomy that liberalism requires. But in conceptualizing the norm we immediately run into inevitable dynamics and problematics, like the inevitable degradation of sovereignty, which can be accounted for and measured, much like utility. This article attempts to conceptualize the norm as theory of political obligation and autonomy called the zero-baseline model, to account for the dynamics and problematics, and to spell out a discourse and system for the norm's implementation in law and praxis. We begin with understanding the relevant limitations in the way we humans perceive the world.

The role of cognitive limitations, like temporal myopia, in humans' failure to mitigate the amorphous threat of climate change and other ecological crises is well-established. What is less studied is how those dissonances created the preceding background conditions, like unsustainable family planning models, that led to the climate and other anthropological crises and drive of most of today's greatest ecological and social problems. For example, those models never accounted for things like Dunbar's number - the inverse relationship between group size and one's meaningful relation to members of the group. Where in those models did we account for normativity in the people themselves, through the integration of future persons in ways that ensured the rules under which they would have to live would reflect their wills and thereby preserve their autonomy? How could sovereignty exist without that? The current models ignore this and many other key determinants of the quality and autonomy of our lives, and have created a cavemanish conception of freedom (Raz) that blocks the social sovereignty liberalism intended.

In short our cognitive limitations have led us to misperceive the nature of human autonomy, or what it means to be free, and how autonomy and freedom are inextricably contingent upon, and flow from, very particular and unavoidably antecedent dynamics in family planning modeling, or how we have and develop children.

The zero-baseline model attempts to correct the particular mistakes that create the misperception of human autonomy, and the poor family planning modeling that perpetuates it. These mistakes include the use of arbitrary baselines (Sunstein) that elided a conception of human power as any form of human influence (climate change and parenting, and the failure of political theories to account for both and the connection between the two, are exemplary), the myth of procreative autonomy, never actually applying the rule that children had to prove reasonable before being emancipated from their parents, not accounting for how sovereigns exclude one another and inevitably degrade individual autonomy within groups, treating the normatively complex process of deconstitution as a simplistic quantitative

issue of overpopulation which puts the effect before the cause and proceeds with no inherent baseline, ignoring the overwhelming role of meaningful group belonging in determining human welfare, using arbitrary baselines – like replacement - for family planning policies, the use of a static, top-down, and noun-form conception of political constitutions rather the dynamic, bottom-up, verb-form conception of constituting, etc.

The zero-baseline model works by revising the traditional, and now moribund, consent-as justification theory of political obligation and autonomy by temporalizing it, de-abstracting its spatial component, and expanding its perspective to 360 degrees to account for all human influence between the preexistence of future generations and the outer edge of the nonhuman world (Weisman), thus requiring the consent or constructive consent of extant and future persons, as well as minimizing the inevitable loss of autonomy as new persons enter the world. The model answers the questions: We are free relative to what? What would freedom as a spatial-temporal ideal look like?

Zero-baseline modeling proceeds from the simple proposition that 1) there is no law without obligation (Hart), 2) no obligation without consent/reason (Locke, Rawls) (which diminishes with growth of the relevant group (Rousseau)), and 3) that there is no consent/reason without nonpolity, or the relative absence of human power. Thus nonpolity (to be contrasted with states of nature and original conditions in prior models) is the baseline from which the loss of human autonomy must be measured; any other baseline would be arbitrary. Add to that inevitable dynamics in human development appreciated by Mill and Raz, but brought out by Feinberg and Becker (quality/quantity tradeoff), as well as the nexus between preexistence and nonpolity (between restoring the nonhuman world and the ecology in which children are born, and how the birth of children will determine the nonhuman world) and we move towards a new model. As described below, the net loss of autonomy can actually be measured with a conceptual device called the lesser power asymmetry.

Using a spatial-temporal conception of nonpolity that accounts for the preexistence of future generations as well as places relatively free of human power on nonpolity, and abandoning procreative autonomy and its property in future children for a grundnorm (a first and fundamental norm) that begins with the value of improved continuity (IC) (which derives from the satiable nature of procreation) and which imbues future children with personhood, the model assumes that each new entrant is an equal sovereign who excludes other sovereigns equally, with a corresponding and constant loss of autonomy (0-1-1. . .). To minimize the loss of autonomy would require a) each new entrant be of a minimum constitutive quality (or emancipated/reasonable (Locke/Rawls)), b) that there be a maximum number of entrants, and c) that they be arranged relative to each other (e.g. equitably), so that they are capable of reconstituting their legalities at will.

The model uses seven values (each of which can be pegged to existing positive law standards) to set the minimum and maximum thresholds:

A qualitative threshold of a minimum level of welfare at entry (IC), the nexus or zero baseline point at which the values are first determined, defined by the welfare of other entrants (fairness), or > MW(F). A qualitative threshold of a minimum quality of sovereignty (S), defined by the standard for emancipation/reason, or > E. A quantitative threshold of a maximum number of emancipated sovereigns (S), defined by a minimum of sovereign role in their democracy, or < R. And finally, a quantitative threshold of a maximum number of sovereigns (S), defined by nonpolity or < N, the nexus or zero baseline point at which the values are last determined.

These thresholds can be set using legal standards we claim to already adhere to, like basic parental fitness, the Children's Rights Convention, biodiversity and wilderness restoration targets, federalism and representative ratios, redistribution polices that attempt to create equality of opportunity. etc. The model will show that, by our own standards, we are not who we should be.

The lived experience of political obligation and autonomy, and a reconciliation of seemingly conflicting fundamental modes of positive communitarian freedom and negative liberal freedom, comes in the dynamism of these values, and is essentially emancipatory, aligning the positive freedom to and the negative freedom from in the emancipation that comes from a spatial-temporal model that maximizes consent by all.

To illustrate we can apply the thresholds to a simple hypothetical for the scenario that must precede all liberal collective action (including the decision to minimize the collective and separate off into a free market system): A townhall meeting where members of the town must agree on a plan. In this process each additional member excludes other members, e.g. time at the podium, the possibility that the plan will reflect the will of another, etc. That inevitable exclusion is reduced or exacerbated contingent upon the quality of each member or whether they are reasonable, e.g. respecting limits on their time at the podium, calling for an unreasonable plan, etc., as well as their relative level of influence. As the town grows a negative feedback loop (a self-exacerbating collective action problem) develops, with each member having less of a role, and less of an incentive to have a role (Somin) as the learned helplessness of being lost in the crowd sets in. The speed with which the loop develops depends on the quantity and quality of the members, their relation to each other in terms of equity of influence, their ability to form a new town, etc., i.e., whether groups are constituting or deconstituting. All of this becomes more complex as we account for intergenerationality.

To minimize the loss of autonomy represented by the planning process would require a) each new entrant be of a minimum constitutive quality, b) that there be a maximum number of entrants, and c) that they be arranged relative to each other in particular ways, e.g. the different levels of influence members of the town have on the plan, in and out of the town hall.

The practical prescription for implementing this model in policies and elsewhere, captured in a non-academic forum described below (Havingkids.org), would require smaller families sharing resources (though a variety of public and private mechanisms and resource transfers) to invest more in every child, and cooperatively aiming to give each a fair start in life. By focusing on the objective needs of future children, parents and communities are forced to abandon the myth of procreative autonomy and replace it with objective reasons for having children, which as described below, align with other aspects of the model to maximize consent/political autonomy.

The zero-baseline model accounts for the loss of autonomy (rather than hiding it by using a degraded concept of sovereignty, as is common today), and the confluence between a) smaller families that develop each child, b)ensuring children can use their development by playing a meaningful role in their democracies, and c) lower population variants that match the natural ecologies in which democracy was born, and best promote human flourishing. Democracies are small, dynamically forming and reforming, and are populated by highly developed people. This is consistent with the healthy, safe and biodiverse ecologies, in which they exist. In other words, the values above align under the zero-baseline model as iterations of human autonomy or freedom.

For example, under the model, the autonomy would-be parents' gain through self-development and meeting a standard of readiness to parent aligns with objective (and naturalistic) reasons for having children and the quality/quantity tradeoff of a smaller family. This aligns with the autonomy of a highly developed child and the morally valuable options in life they will have, which aligns with the autonomy created by gender equity, cooperativeness within groups, a level of inherent security in groups that avoids the need for top-down limitations on autonomy, as well as fluidity among the groups. The resulting smaller populations and high levels of development align with one's having a meaningful voice in and control over public affairs, which aligns with the autonomy created by fulfilling one's need for meaningful group membership, which aligns with reduced consumption, which aligns with the decentralization of concentrations of power into future generations, discussed below. All of this aligns with a healthy and safe environment, and the freedom – or autonomy - from others that is only possible through interaction with the nonhuman world.

This is the confluent dynamic balance the comes with bookending human power with the objectivity of nonpolity, and that must precede and encapsulate any system of human subjectivity. That balance, between community and autonomy, and of political obligation and autonomy, is an antecedent and necessary condition for liberalism and freedom to obtain; these things are not possible without the sort of grundnorm and values described herein. They give autonomy and freedom a base, or touchstone, in the spatial-temporal world.

In other words: How can democracies make good choices while being inclusive (Dahl)? How do we ensure freedom? Make people, in quality, quantity, and relative arrangement, who are incapable of being subjugated. If we take democracy (or sovereignty, from an individual's perspective) seriously, there is no other way than focusing on the people themselves.

In legal theory parlance this remodeling legitimates "preconstitutional" systems by treating the zero-baseline model as the grundnorm, and integrating their members in the process of creating democratic, or self-determining, normativity. The integration, as a condition of something being law, would apply to positivist conceptions of law as well. The move towards zero-baseline theory is represented, in the context of the rule of law, by changing the concept of noun-form, static and top-down constitutions (which overly concretize things that are inherently normative) to the dynamic, bottom-up and verb-form of constituting.

Note that the quantity, quality, and arrangement (i.e. relative equity) of persons, dealt with by the model, is lexically primary. We are before we do. For this and other reasons discussed below, the model overrides, like jus cogens, conflicting norms. Note also that the zero-baseline model was not feasible until recently, given current changes in reproductive technology, international law, advances in gender equity, developments in the science of child development, etc. The pressing need for new modeling is especially timely, given the climate crisis, fertility transitions, the growing gap between rich and poor, forthcoming advances in automation, the use of CRISPR technology, etc.

Having corrected the mistakes in the traditional political obligation and autonomy modeling, this article describes why the zero-baseline model proves ten to twenty times more effective at mitigating climate change, improving child welfare and equity, building democracy, reaching other development goals - and avoiding unacceptable ecological and social risks - than any downstream efforts. For that reason, because of its lexical primacy, because it is a necessary condition of human autonomy and freedom and hence the legitimacy of systems of social organization, to simply be preserved as an option against

irreparable harm, and for other reasons, this article goes on to describe why the model overrides norms with which it conflicts and authorizes actions to secure it by any means effective.

These means include securing guaranteed minimum incomes for children pegged to family planning reform, enabling legislation for no-procreation probation and parole orders, expediting approval of long-acting male contraceptives for market, the incorporation of a "smaller family" policy into UN sustainable development goals, etc. This article also describes the forces that push against this remodeling,, or the hierarchical and anti-democratic entities that maintain their biopower (Foucault) positioning by ensuring large quantities of people of low constitutive quality, arranged inequitably. These forces maintain control by literally positioning people against each other, preventing their development, and limiting them to a fraction of their intellectual potential.

Finally, this article describes how the model provides the basis for a very specific praxis and constitutive discourse to legitimate systems and further human autonomy, by using the new modeling to ensure a) the simultaneous liberation of future children and nonhumans (the most vulnerable an numerous moral entities in the world) from propertyhood and constant colonization at the spatial-temporal border discussed above, b) the unification of child welfare, environmental/animal protection, and human rights and democracy movements around the new modeling, given its efficacy, c) the manifestation of a real (spatial-temporal) social contract that satisfies disparate and competing political perspectives and excludes unreasonable or preconsitutional people (Rawls), and d) an immediate, conscious and accelerated move towards United Nations low-variant world population projections, sustainable development goals, and the meeting the obligations of the Children's Rights Convention, all facilitated by specific wealth transfers and new family planning incentives.

This discourse requires people to de-abstract their normative claims and account for the quantity, quality and arrangement of all of the actual people upon which their claims rely, and the values at stake and dynamics at play, which pushes people toward accepting constituting as a fundamental normative framework. Constitutive discourse speaks truth to power, and thereby cabins the subjective exercise of all forms of human influence with the objectivity of the model and its irrefutable basic values, starting from and ending with the touchstone of nonpolity.

Changing political obligation and autonomy models is complex. For that reasons, and because the new modeling requires the cooperative praxis of prospective parents across the globe, the article provides a useful heuristic throughout: Changing from a parent-focused and subjective family planning model to a child-focused (given that children have the most at stake) and objective "Fair Start" family planning model, as well as specific actions to ensure that change, messaged through an operational nonprofit that has begun the discourse, Havingkids.org. A simple test for the change in perspective is whether we can see the resource transfers as cooperative entitlements owned by future children, rather than ethically-suspect incentives aimed that the parents.

Quite simply, we can only reduce the age-old tensions between the individual and the collective, freedom and security, etc. and further human autonomy, by creating sufficiently capable people. Families cannot do that in isolation from one another. We create sufficiently capable people by overcoming the cognitive dissonances and misperceptions we carry regarding the nature of human autonomy, and decentralizing concentrations of human power (governmental, corporate, oligarchical, prospective parental, etc.) into future generations through zero-baseline modeling and its lay

translation, Fair Start family planning. Because the model overrides conflicting norms, all may engage in its praxis by any means effective.

The zero-baseline model provides a perspective, or spatial-temporal cognition, to help overcome the psychological limitations discussed above, those that hide the inevitable first behaviors and dynamics that promote or degrade human autonomy. This cognition goes well beyond Rawls' prerequisite "sense of justice, and could prove the key to solving many of today's social and ecological crises through a concrete praxis that emancipatory, effective, and designed to appeal across the political spectrum.

The only way to be free from human power is to consent to it, in norms. That process is a necessary condition for political obligation and autonomy. And it requires accounting for certain first and inevitable dynamics in the process, and reflecting that accounting in a first norm, or grundnorm, that constitutes us.

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