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Universal Basic Income (UBI): A Cure-All or Band-Aid?

Abstract

With the triple crisis of capitalism looming and, in the U.S., a poorly performing welfare state, Universal Basic Income (UBI) has returned to popular attention. To assess whether this is warranted and, more importantly, to provide answer on the extent to which a UBI can or should be considered a cure-all, this work, first, examines the historical development of UBI proposals including those stemming from European Social Democrats and Libertarians. Next, pilot programs at the local, state, and national level are critically examined for their methodologies and empirical results. Turning, then, to theory on de-commodification, unpaid labor, and the equality-jobs tradeoff, this paper explores criterion within that theory for assessing UBI and its impacts. Ultimately, I suggest that a UBI is not a cure-all, but it does not have to be a band-aid and, alongside that, a reconceptualization of social policy, generally, and our goals with UBI, specifically, is needed.

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Universal Basic Income (UBI): A Cure-All or Band-Aid?

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In Partial Fulfillment

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by

Madison Beckner

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Abstract

With the triple crisis of capitalism looming and, in the U.S., a poorly performing welfare state, Universal Basic Income (UBI) has returned to popular attention. To assess whether this is warranted and, more importantly, to provide answer on the extent to which a UBI can or should be considered a cure-all, this work, first, examines the historical development of UBI proposals including those stemming from European Social Democrats and Libertarians. Next, pilot programs at the local, state, and national level are critically examined for their methodologies and empirical results. Turning, then, to theory on de-commodification, unpaid labor, and the equality-jobs tradeoff, this paper explores criterion within that theory for assessing UBI and its impacts. Ultimately, I suggest that a UBI is not a cure-all, but it does not have to be a band-aid and, alongside that, a reconceptualization of social policy, generally, and our goals with UBI, specifically, is needed.

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Chapter 1: U.S. Welfare History and The Triple Crisis

The reality faced by average Americans today can be described as grim, at best. As has been thoroughly documented, inequality in the United States has increased exponentially since the dawn of neoliberalism with the most deleterious effects being felt along the lines of race and gender. Add to this a lack of social mobility, growing precarity in the labor market, pressures of inflation, and the fallout from the two most recent crises and the picture becomes clear. Americans are faced with jobs that don't pay, food prices they cannot afford, emergencies for which they are unprepared and little hope of improving their circumstances. Such a situation would seem to call for action by the government. Yet, despite the promise of being a "hand-up", the U.S. welfare system has consistently failed to alleviate poverty and improve welfare. Plagued with derogatory and, often, erroneous conceptualizations of the recipient and increasingly work- focused, reforms have aligned closer with America's "work harder" dogma but are far from producing positive outcomes.

Though the entire history of the U.S. welfare system would be far beyond the scope of this paper, there are a few counterproductive ideas that have served to shape the system and major periods of reform worth noting. Specifically, as author Dobelstein (2017) notes, there has long been a narrative about poverty's root causes. Namely,

Americans like to believe that poverty is a moral failing on the part of the poor individual while disregarding macroeconomic conditions and policies that have contributed (Dobelstein, 2017). This has, of course, resulted in offering support to some and not others, what many have termed the “deserving” and “underserving” poor (Iceland 2013; Jencks 1992; Katz 1989; Patterson 1994, as cited in, Moffitt 2015). It has also shaped the delivery of benefits with a growing and significant portion being based on earned income (Moffitt 2015). Another idea that has long had a hold on policy is the characterization of recipients, especially women and minorities, as being scammers taking advantage of the system. Dating as far back as Malthus and repeated into the 21st century, for example, has been the idea that women are actively choosing to have more children in order to receive greater benefits (Tomczak 2020). Despite there being little concrete, empirical evidence to support it, this idea has resulted in punitive benefits caps and resources redirected toward family planning (Tomczak 2020). More generally, ideas such as these may be seen as the underlying cause for things like time limits and work requirements.

Much like any other system in the U.S., the welfare system is defined by a patchwork of programs and inconsistent reform periods that may be characterized as relying less on reality and more on ideology. Ideology, indeed, that Esping-Andersen (1990) describes as “liberal”, stemming from old English poor laws and heavily favoring the market. Though there had been scattered policies in place well before, like the poor laws and poor houses, the first federal intervention aimed at creating a safety net was the

1935 Social Security Act (Dobelstein 2017). A response to the Great Depression which clearly opposed the American narrative of individual responsibility, this act most significantly provided benefits for retirement and unemployment. Though there were also benefits for children and the disabled, the primary purpose was to shield individuals against financial hardship not of their own creation and it required paying into the system. As author Dobelstein notes, it could be described as a “reluctant political response...but it preserved the underlying principles of economic individualism” (Dobelstein 2017). The next big wave of welfare reform came at the helm of years of social and political struggle for equal rights. In the 1960s, the American welfare system saw major expansion with the creation of several programs including: food stamps, healthcare, education programs, WIC [The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children], and the earned income tax credit (Moffitt 2015). Though mostly unsuccessful, Republicans won in the 1970s and were quick to offer alternatives to the reforms of the 60s. With Milton Friedman as his advisor, for example, Richard Nixon proposed the “Family Assistance Plan” which would largely eliminate benefits and, in their place, offer a negative income tax credit. That is, benefits would be almost entirely and directly tied to work. Along with this, Nixon’s proposal outright suggested a requirement for work (Nixon 1969). Authors Zeckhauser and Shuck (1970) criticized this plan by suggesting it was unethical and coercive. Clearly, these reform proposals relied heavily on the narratives of scammers and moral failings. Finally, in 1996, the Clinton administration saw the enactment of the “Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity

Reconciliation Act” (PRWORA) (Wiseman, 1996). Often described as the most significant reform in the history of welfare, this act provided large-scale change and is the primary creator of the modern system. (Martin and Koen C011)

Clearly visible in the name itself, this reform represented a finality to the growing worry about scammers, moral failings, and dependents. In many ways, it may best be described as a reversal of progress. It included life-time limits on benefit collection and increased attention toward work, both in resources being directed toward employment and in outright requirements. At the same time, this reform gave large discretionary power to states on benefit types, amounts, and eligibility standards (Martin and Koen 2011). It also eliminated the right to benefits even if eligibility requirements were met, which gave states more power in determining who received benefits. Finally, this reform included a change in federal financing, a cap on benefits for children born after enrollment, a focus on preventing teenage pregnancy and an incentivization of marriage (Martin and Koen 2011). Though some have been staunch supporters of the reform, primarily citing the reduction of participants, authors Martin and Koen argue that much of the seeming success would better be attributed to the growing 1990s economy that created as many 20 million jobs in the later years (Martin and Koen 2011). Similarly, it has been shown that the least generous benefits are often given by states with high minority populations which, in turn, creates racial disparities in access to help (Rodgers and Pane 2007). Finally, as shown by Moffit in his analysis of benefit changes, the switch

to PRWORA meant a redistribution of benefits such that those, especially single mothers, in the deepest poverty received fewer benefits (Moffit 2015).

Finally, as is evidenced in Esping-Andersen (1990), the United States and other Anglo-Saxon countries which have been founded on liberal ideology perform relatively poorly in terms of social stratification and de-commodification. Though greater detailed will be added to these terms and the United States' performance along these line in later chapters, the primary point is that, compared to Scandinavian countries, the United States' welfare system does very little to change market inequalities or protect its citizens from the market (Esping-Andersen 1990). Indeed, the United States is a firm believer in market superiority and, within this belief, finds a basis for blaming the individual for their position and as mentioned earlier, sorting the poor into "deserving" and "undeserving" sects.

Unfortunately, and with this background in mind, the threat of the triple crisis of capitalism- inequality, instability and the ecological crisis- becomes an even more eminent threat to a growing class of people who find little success in markets and a promise of help from the government that does little more than support that which has already left them behind. In 2018, for example, the U.S. was experiencing levels of inequality unseen since at least 1917, aside from 2012, and far surpassing those that plagued the 1920s. (Saez 2018). At the same time, poverty rates in the United States have remained virtually stagnant since the 1980s. (United States Census Bureau n.d.). According to the official poverty rate, 37.9 million Americans were in poverty in 2021.

Other estimates, using broader parameters, suggest that as much as 40% of the U.S. population is impoverished or low-income. (“Income inequality” 2022).

The recent Covid-19 pandemic has, of course, only served to exacerbate this problem. In 2018, the 99% had recovered approximately 75% of losses experienced during the Great Recession. (Saez 2018). Late 2019 and early 2020 is likely to have reversed much of this progress as it brought substantial unemployment and economic losses which disproportionately affected those already in precarious financial situations. Only adding to this suffering, inflation has significantly reduced purchasing power in the last year. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, inflation increased by 8.2% year-over-year as of September 2022. Stronger drivers of this inflation have been food (11.2%) and energy (19.8%) (U.S. BLS 2022). Again, only adding to the struggles of working, the Federal Reserve recently announced a plan to raise interest rates which will have the effect of increasing unemployment- hitting hardest those who are already suffering (Zahn 2022).

Finally, the United States and the rest of the world are experiencing the eminent threat of climate change. Threatening our lives and livelihoods, the climate crisis will most certainly affect the lower classes first and most severely. According to the most recent report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (2022), the climate crisis is already affecting our health, economic activity, food production, weather patterns and ecosystems. The panel (2022) warns that “Without limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius, key risk to North America are expected to intensify rapidly.” (IPCC

2022 pg. 3) One driver of the climate crisis is our seemingly insatiable consumption patterns and need for growth, of which the United States is especially guilty.

Taken together, it isn't hard to understand increasing support for radical politicians and ideas. Some of these have, of course, served more nefarious purposes while covertly (or not so) perpetuating the status quo. Others aren't necessarily new but have seen revamped interest in recent years. For example, Universal Basic Income has gained the attention of prominent American politicians such as Hillary Clinton and Andrew Yang (Zamora 2017). Across the globe, UBI experiments have been implemented, social parties aimed at promotion created, and global networks established. So, is Universal Basic Income (UBI) the cure-all we need or yet another band-aid?

Chapter 2: Universal Basic Income in Context- A Historical Development

Universal Basic Income (UBI) is often defined using the definition of the contemporary European social democrats. For example, the Basic Income Earth Network (BIEN), founded by Phillip Van Parijs, suggests that a universal basic income must meet a set of conditions to qualify (BIEN n.d.). Namely, it must be made in cash, universally, on a periodic basis and on an individual level. It must also be given without a means-test or a work requirement (BIEN n.d.). While this is the most common definition attached to the proposal, there are also proposals put forth by libertarians which also oft appear in the UBI literature. Though, as will be shown, the two are different in their requirements, both proposals by libertarians and social democrats share in the most basic tenants. Both intend to put cash in the hands of people and, in doing so, believe a host of problems will be solved.

For libertarians there is not one agreed upon definition in the same formal manner as in the social democrats. However, the majority of the proposals stemming from this group are made in cash, made on a periodic basis, sometimes yearly, and implicitly or explicitly require work and means-testing. The most famous of the libertarian UBI equivalents is the negative income tax (NIT) proposed by Milton Friedman (Friedman & Friedman 2002). As will be shown in greater detail below, the NIT program attempts to tie benefits to the incentivization of labor through incorporating transfers into a slightly

modified taxation system. That is, Friedman's (2002) proposal creates an absolute floor for income and modifies the taxation system at the lowest levels of earned income such that benefits do not disappear entirely as one is to take up employment. Depending on the specific structure, of course, this could effectively produce a system in which net income, meant here to be earned income net of taxes paid or transfers received, is higher for those seeking employment compared to those receiving the income floor alone.

While the structure of this proposal is incentivizing labor and, thus, can be seen as an implicit requirement, libertarians have not shied away from outright requiring work. For example, in Friedman's advisement to the Nixon administration, the Nixon administration produced the "Family Assistance Plan" (Nixon 1969). In a 1969 radio address, President Nixon stated "But what of the others- those who can work but choose not? Well, the answer is very simple. Under this proposal, everyone who accepts benefits must also accept work." (Nixon 1969 para. 40). Of course, Nixon, and presumably his advisor Friedman, are explicitly requiring not suggesting it as was the case for Friedman's original proposal, NIT. Other proposers falling into this category have similar motivations as it relates to work. Namely, they, unlike the social democrats, make attempts to place people in employment with their proposals. The libertarians may also be seen as creating an absolute floor for income, or in the words of social democrats, a minimum income guarantee, by providing transfers until a minimum standard is fulfilled either through an NIT or through a transfer with a less progressive taxation system.

A UBI stemming from the European Social Democrats, on the other hand, does not create a floor in the same sense. Rather, they intend to provide income on top of or in addition to other possible earned income. Of course, the structure of taxation even under a European social democratic proposal may produce an effective limit on UBI such that those earning employment income beyond a certain point will pay more in taxes than is received in benefits. However, this limit is markedly different in that it tends to be beyond a bare minimum subsistence standard and is generally produced through a more progressive or generous taxation system. Thus, while libertarians may be effectively limiting benefits to the absolute poorest, a UBI from the social democrats tends to provide benefits beyond these lowest levels and, sometimes, even into the middle or more of the income distribution.

It is also important to note that there are several names used to describe the broad set of policies that could be considered under the Universal Basic Income umbrella. Names for the policy that have yet to have been mentioned include: demogrant, citizen's wage, social credit, state bonus, etc. Some proposers have utilized a different name due to the lack of term coining while others seem to be doing so in order to signal their differentiation from social democrats. Whatever the name, UBI literature can be broken in party line categories as previously discussed: European Social Democrats or Right (often American) Libertarians. There is good reason for a division made along these lines as the consensus within party lines is largely consistent, but it is between parties that the policy loses harmony. As seen in the above, for example, deviations between party lines

can mean differences in attitudes toward labor and, effectively, means-testing through the limitation of benefit recipients set through varying taxation systems. Similarly, as has been argued by Peter Sloman (2017), as well as many other UBI reviews, Universal Basic Income proposals have often come at the helm of sociopolitical and economic distress (Sloman 2017). The most recent wave which has gained some traction in producing pilot programs and political campaigns promises, for example, can be seen as a reaction to growing and imminent concerns over environmental degradation, instability, inequality, and the poor outcomes of the U.S. welfare system. With this, each period discussed provides some background on the events that gave rise to renewed interest. It should also become clear that despite its seemingly modern appearance, the history, and the concept of UBI is a relatively old one. Though most agree the start is somewhere in the 1790s, some have even suggested that its root would be better traced to Ancient Greece or earlier societies (Widerquist 2020).

2.1 The Beginnings

As mentioned, most authors agree that Universal Basic Income has its start in the mid to late 1790s. There have, however, been arguments that have suggested the root can be better traced to earlier societies and, specifically, those earlier societies' mechanisms for ensuring community survival (Widerquist 2020). Namely, these arguments suggest that the practices of redistribution such as the sharing of food beyond one's immediate family or the tradition of a common ownership in land constitute a Universal Basic Income (Widerquist 2020). While it may be true that such practices intended to and likely

succeed in preventing a level of absolute “poverty”¹, the characterization of these practices as being a UBI misses both the context in which a UBI has been proposed as well as the modern definition. On the latter, as noted by Karl Widerquist (2022), UBI tends to be in the form of a cash transfer “and because small-scale hunter-gatherers or agrarian communities do not have cash economies, they did not have Basic Incomes” (p. 33). Similarly, on the former point, the context in which a UBI is proposed is within the frameworks of capitalism. A solution to problems resulting from a system which requires one to commodify their labor time, does not guarantee survival and promotes private property, UBI is based on similar principles to the redistributive practices of earlier periods. Yet, it is different in that it is a proposed solution to these problems unique to capitalism. Thus, more accurate tracings of the history of UBI begin alongside the development of capitalism.

The earliest UBI proposals and more accurate tracings, therefore, begin with the works of Thomas Paine and Thomas Spence which were published in 1795 and 1796, respectively (King and Marangos 2006). Often, their proposals are suggested to be written in reaction to the French and American revolutions wherein citizens across the world questioned the role and form of government and advocated for their social, political and economic rights (King & Marangos 2006). The latter, of course, being particularly focused on the allotment of private property. While both writers were heavily

¹ Absolute “Poverty” is used to describe a lack of resources to the extent of an inability to meet basic survival needs. It does not refer to a lack of resources in a monetary sense.

influenced by this chaos, as exemplified in Paine's involvement in both revolutions, a broader view of the time period would suggest that the inspiration for these proposals as well as, at least in part, the revolutions themselves were founded in the transition to capitalism within Europe.

Prior to the development of capitalism, much of Europe was organized in feudalistic societies. The transition out of feudalism began, among other things, as a result of the production of agricultural surpluses, urbanization, and the introduction of money (Schneider 2019). With the introduction of money and an incentivization to amass money, then, lords who had previously shared land with serfs began to lay claim to common property, effectively privatizing land. As noted by author Geoffrey Schneider (2019), "By the 1700s, 75-90 percent of peasants had been forced off of farms all over Europe and into urban slums." and "the enclosure movement established the legal right of lords to the land they seized." (p. 40). This massive transition created a class of newly and desperately poor people, conglomerated in cities without a means of survival. They were the landless poor. Such conditions, of course, prompted governments to attempt to adopt systems of support. Possibly the result of disorganization to come out of a new problem, these systems of support were largely patchwork systems of poor laws and private charities that were not well received. Case and point, the Speenhamland system. Thus, with failing support systems and continued miserable conditions the period, namely the 1790s, was ripe with opportunity for change and new ideas.

Thomas Paine and his work were clearly a product of this environment. As argued by King and Marangos (2006), Paine's work underwent a period of radicalization as a result of his involvement with both the French and American revolutions. In fact, the dedication in Paine's (1792) earlier *Rights of Man* was addressed directly to the American president George Washington and, in part, reads "...in defense of those principles of freedom which your exemplary virtue hath so eminently contributed to establish" (p. 1). While this earlier work was primarily concerned with the role and function of government in support of the revolutions, the plight and economic distress of the masses was not lost upon Paine. *Agrarian Justice* published in 1795 was his call for a Universal Basic Income (Paine 1795). Focusing on the poverty and destitution suffered by those who had been displaced during the transition from feudalism and criticizing the current system of charity and welfare, Paine offers a justification for his proposal based on the application of private property. Namely, Paine argued that Earth is a common inheritance and, thus, all people are entitled to some compensation for their part in natural land (Paine 1795).

Clarifying his definition of "natural land", Paine (1795) suggests that his argument and proposal is not meant to advocate for the dissolution of private property altogether. Rather, Paine (1795) believes that the land in its unaltered state can be considered common property but if one is to make improvements to the land, then he is justified in claiming it to be his property. With that, then, Paine (1795) continues his proposal by contrasting the period prior to the development of private property with the

current state. He calls the current state “civilized society” and the prior period the “natural state”. Framing the “civilized society” as positive societal progress and positioning private property as the primary differentiator, Paine (1795) argues that no man, in the “civilized society”, should live in a state worse off than he would have in the “natural state”. He notes, however, that many in the “civilized society” are, in fact, worse off as a result of being landless. Thus, Paine (1795) suggests a solution of compensation for one’s share in land previously held in common. Specifically, Paine (1795) suggests an inheritance tax of 10% or 20%, if there is no heir to that inheritance. This money, he says, should be collected into a common fund and used first for public services, Then, the money could be used to fund payments to the elderly and new mothers, among other things. Finally, with what is left, Paine (1795) believes a one-time payment should be made to all those reaching the age of 21.

Paine’s proposal has, of course, faced several criticisms. Some, for example, have suggested that Paine’s proposal is too conservative based on the percentage of tax he suggests. Thomas Spence (1796) is especially critical of this, saying in both the preface and appendix of his proposal, “The poor, beggarly stipends which he would have us accept...” (para. 3) and “The people will, as it were, sell their birthright for a mess of porridge, by accepting a paltry consideration in lieu of their rights.” (Appendix, para. 1). Malcom Torry (2021) is another critic of Paine, going so far as to suggest that Paine does not deserve the “first” accreditation in the history of UBI due to the structure of his proposal. Namely, Torry (2021) is arguing that Paine misses the periodic payment

feature, which as noted previously, is a critical feature of a UBI according to the contemporary European social democrat definition. Instead of meeting this criterion, Paine (1795) is suggesting that the money left over in the common fund after, essentially, performing the functions of a welfare system should be dispersed in a lump sum to all those reaching a certain age. While Torry (2021) admits, aside from limiting to a specific age category, the proposal is universal in that it does not explicitly exclude anyone, Torry describes this lump-sum, one-time transfer as more of a “basic capital” (Torry 2021). Capital, of course, being meant to allude to the lack of regular payments. Torry instead credits Thomas Spence with having the first UBI as Spence’s proposal suggests quarterly payments over one-time transfers (Torry 2021).

Much like Thomas Paine, Spence seems to have been influenced by the chaos of the revolutions taking place during the 1790s and, specifically, the destitution created out of private property and its allocation. This is exemplified in that Spence (1796) follows the same justification as does Paine- that land is common. Unlike Paine, however, Spence (1796) does not believe any form of private property to be justifiable. Rather, Spence (1796) suggests that all property should be transferred to the possession of the community. Framing his argument around a hypothetical conversation between a poor mother holding an infant and the “aristocracy”, Spence (1796) states that the community will take possession of land, improved upon or not, and rent said land back to those who wish to use it. Electing a board of female leaders who would oversee the project, the money from renting common land would be put into a common fund. From that common fund, Spence

(1796) suggests a quarterly payment be made to all and the payment amount enough to satisfy survival with the addition of some luxuries. Specifically, Spence (1796) believes that $\frac{2}{3}$ of the entire rent collected should go toward covering this quarterly payment.

One criticism Spence (1796) seems to anticipate in writing his proposal, and one which has been a primary concern even into the modern period, is the possible disincentivizing effect on labor. Namely, the concern is that if income is to be provided to every individual in the community, free of restrictions or requirements, then no one would be willing to supply their labor time. Ultimately, of course, the belief is this would lead to an unsustainable system in which not even the most basic survival goods are produced. This may be, especially, concerning given Spence's (1796) suggestion that the payment made be enough to both ensure survival as well as support the purchase of some luxuries. Spence (1796), however, argues that labor will continue to be incentivized by not providing all with all possible luxuries. There will, as he sees it, still be reason enough to sell one's labor time.

Another criticism of Spence's work could be in the lack of details provided within his solution. Primarily an argument of morals, Spence (1796) does not go much into detail about the specifics of payment or rent. This is, of course, aside from the $\frac{2}{3}$ that Spence (1796) suggests would be used for direct payments and a note about the rents collected adjusting for inflation, stating "If foreign or domestic trade increase, the price of commodities will in proportion also increase, and the rents of course will rise..." (appendix para. 30). Paine (1795), on the other hand, is much clearer in these details as

he suggests a 10% or 20% inheritance tax. Paine (1795) also gives an example of what he would suggest as being the average wealth of a family in England and the taxes that would be levied on their wealth, plus the payments made back to their heirs upon reaching 21. Despite their various shortcomings, however, both the proposals of Paine (1795) and Spence (1796) sparked interest in a Universal Basic Income and influenced the work of proposers who followed, some even into the 20th century. While popular attention to the work quickly dissipated after, especially, Paine (1795) during this period, calls continued somewhat silently into the mid 1800s.

One such call, that of Joseph Charlier (1841), has been described by Parijs and Vanderborght (2017) as, simply, a national application of Thomas Spence's proposal. While it is true that Charlier (1841) echoed the justification of common ownership in land used by both Paine (1795) and Spence (1796) and reached a largely similar solution to that of Spence (1796), Charlier (1841) added an additional element to the primary thread of argumentation. Charlier (1841), in his book *Solution du Probleme Social*, reiterates the idea of a common ownership in land by suggesting that all other creatures on Earth share in and cannot be excluded from the land or its fruits. Thus, he concludes, private property and its allocation have unjustly created poor conditions, one which renders a solution. However, Charlier (1841) does not end his argument here. Rather, Charlier (1841) continues by defining two types of needs possessed by humans, what he terms "absolute or vital needs" and "relative or acquired needs" (p. 106).

The former of these needs constitutes a right in the mind of Charlier (1841) as they encapsulate all which is required to ensure basic survival. The latter, of course, could be defined as luxuries outside of survival necessity. With these two needs in mind, Charlier (1841) then explains that allowing some to own private property while others are excluded from survival, is to allow one group to violate the rights of another. He says,

“Now, human life can only be safeguarded if vital needs are guaranteed on the basis of the collective right to land. Since today this guarantee does not exist, human life is often endangered by the encroachment of the acquired needs of some on the vital needs of others; human creatures starve to death while others wallow in abundance.” (Charlier 1841 p. 107).

Out of this, then, Charlier (1848) extends the argument made by Spence and/or Paine to not only include a right to the land but an explicit right to all needs which are required for survival.

Interestingly, however, Charlier (1841) agrees with Paine’s argument in finding a justifiable basis on which private property can exist. While Spence (1796) argued that property, built and/or improved upon or not, should become the property of the collective, Charlier (1841) agrees that there is some piece of property that can be justifiably owned. Charlier (1841) defines this as being the property, which is created out of one’s own labor, for example, a building. Yet, Charlier (1841) arrives at the conclusion that the state should take possession of all land and rent it out with the rents being used for a guaranteed income.

Finally in this period, as cited in histories in both the books by Parijs and Vanderborcht (2017) as well as Torry (2021), John Stuart Mill could be seen as a

supporter of UBI. Again, echoing the earlier works, Mill's work was largely a reaction to the poor law systems in place at the time as well as the inequalities created, as he saw it, out of landownership (Parijs and Vanderborcht 2017) Referencing Fourierism², John Stuart Mill was particularly appalled by the system of support leaning heavily on private charity. Mill advocated for the establishment of a subsistence standard for the poorest and was not against work requirements (Parijs and Vanderborcht 2017). For the contemporary social democrat, then, Mill's proposal would be categorized as a minimum income guarantee (Parijs and Vanderbrought 2017; Malcom Torry 2021). As seen in the previous discussion of definitions, however, Mill's proposal aligns with those proposed by libertarians.

2.2 The Post World War Revival

After the somewhat silent calls that lasted into the mid-1800s, Universal Basic Income virtually disappeared until after the first World War. Just as the revolutions and the repercussions of private property allotments had ushered in a period of calls, the conditions of the working class and the rise of socialism in the Soviet Union revamped interest in the policy (Slomon 2017).

² Fourierism is a reference to the beliefs of Charles Fourier. Charles Fourier, like some before him, had argued that the establishment of private property had excluded many from the ability to survive through use of land. With this, Fourier believed it was necessary to provide those excluded with a minimum subsistence. He said, "If the civilized order deprives man of the four branches of natural subsistence, hunting, fishing, picking and grazing, which make up the first right, the class which took the land owes to the frustrated class a minimum of abundant subsistence" (as cited by Parijs and Vanderborcht).

Clearly influenced by these national conditions and world events, Bertrand Russell (1918) published *Roads to Freedom: Socialism, Anarchism and Syndicalism*. Unlike the authors before him, Russell (1918) was not concerned with private property rights nor did his proposal mention a justification of common ownership of land. Rather, Russell's (1918) primary argument was that there exist flaws in the system of capitalism which necessitate a solution. However, in presenting the histories, primary principles, and hypothetical workings of both the socialist and anarchist systems, Russell (1918) argued that neither presented an optimal path forward nor would their promises of a utopia be delivered. Instead, Russell (1918) suggested that capitalist societies needed to adopt a Universal Basic Income.

Russell (1918) argues that socialism and anarchism both make promises of freedom and/or levels of equality but he goes on to explain that neither system's dreams of utopia will materialize. For socialism, Russell (1918) suggests that the state owning all capital and land would require a level of work from all participants in order to continue the functioning of society. Though there would be a level of equality in needing work from all, Russell (1918) believes it is unjust to force all to work or to remove the freedom of choosing one's work. Primarily, it seems, this belief is driven by what Russell (1918) sees as coming out of leisure time. In an earlier argument he makes regarding the inequality of leisure time in capitalism provided by an inequality in wealth and opportunity, Russell (1918) suggests that leisure is of the utmost importance as it drives creativity and, therefore, leads to the production of arts. Clearly, Russell (1918) believes

that the arts are paramount to a happy life and a worthwhile society. He says, "...and above all from the joy of life and its expression in the spontaneous creations of art and science. It is these things that make an age or nation worthy of existence..." (Russel 1918 p. 138).

Along a similar vein, Russell (1918) argues that those who are inclined to take positions of power are often those who are not concerned with the conditions of the poor or the inequalities among the masses. He fears that a system of socialism would become easily overrun by these types and said types would, thus, oversee assigning work. Russell (1918) believes this will, ultimately, lead to a system which compromises on the freedom it promises. He says,

"... but those who hold power after the reform has been carried out are likely to belong, in the main, to the ambitious executive type which has in all ages possessed itself of the government of nations. And this type has never shown itself tolerant of opposition or friendly to freedom." (Russell, 1918, p. 108)

With that, then, Russell (1918) concludes socialism cannot produce freedom for all nor can it be the solution to the ails of capitalism.

Turning to anarchism, Russell (1918) suggests that anarchists are after freedom in the purest form and would, thus, not require work at all. The anarchist system, Russell (1918) argues, would also have all products and services, luxury or otherwise, distributed evenly among the population. However, with the lack of work requirement like in socialism, or a scheme of incentivization created out of not providing luxury goods, Russell (1918) believes it would be near impossible to continue production enough to

meet the distributional goals of an archaist system. Thus, Russell (1918) suggests a UBI. Russell (1918) suggests a UBI would not outright require work but would accomplish some of the goals of equality present in both the socialist and anarchist ideologies through the distribution of cash. Importantly, however, Russell (1918) believes a UBI would overcome the potential downfall of anarchism because there would still be an incentive to work for those who wish to possess luxuries. Russell (1918) suggests that this would be the case because the capitalist system of wages would remain intact.

Though Russell (1918) does not provide details on financing or function of his Universal Basic Income much in the way that Thomas Spence lacked details, Russell (1918) does provide a thorough argument against possible sources of dissent. Specifically, Russell (1918) clearly explains that labor will not be disincentivized, a criticism Spence was also clear to present in his original argument. Russell (1918), like Spence, argues that luxuries will not be distributed to all. Instead, the system of capitalist wages will continue to provide an income, in this case, an income beyond the UBI and it is only in this income beyond that one would be able to acquire luxuries. In addition, Russell (1918) reiterates society's need for leisure in producing the arts. Thus, reinforcing a belief that labor should not be forced nor should the lack of providing one's labor be vilified.

Another possible criticism Russell (1918) is clear to acknowledge and argue against is that which would suggest that a UBI would invert the wage system. This argument puts forth the idea that there would be no reason for people to take low-wage,

often repetitive or dangerous, jobs if not for an inability to provide for oneself. Russell (1918) acknowledges that a UBI is likely to result in this but suggests that it is not an imperfection, nor does it constitute reason for dismissal of the policy. Russell (1918) again reiterates similar arguments regarding his beliefs on labor. He suggests that it is cruel that society forces people to work in these jobs out of a fear of starvation. He says, for example,

“...that no work could be got out of them except under threat of dismissal and consequent starvation. But is this as certain as people are inclined to suppose at first? If work were to remain what most work is now, no doubt it would be very hard to induce people to undertake it except from fear of destitution.” (Russell 1918 p. 99)

after having described the belief among some that work will not be induced under such a system. He also suggests that it is these jobs which provide the most societal value and that they should be provided with higher wages to compensate for their value and/or their danger or repetitiveness. For Russell (1918), it is exactly because no one would want to do these jobs that they should provide higher incentivization.

Dennis and Mabel Milner also published a UBI proposal in 1918 with their book *Scheme for a State Bonus*. Clearly influenced by their surroundings, the Milners (1918) mention both the payments made to the families of soldiers in World War 1 as well as the chaos in the Soviet Union as sources of inspiration for their work. With this inspiration, the Milners (1918) propose a flat 20% tax on income which will be pooled into a common fund. Out of it, then, each person will be paid “5/- (prewar)” (Milner & Milner 1918 p. 7), where “/-” was to indicate shillings. Thus, suggesting a payment equivalent to

the pre-war 5 shillings. The Milners (1918) suggest that the amount paid should be “...just sufficient to maintain life and liberty if all else failed” (p.7) and should be paid on a regular basis.

Echoing arguments made by Russell, the Milners (1918) are also under the belief that the UBI is likely to invert the wage system but, again, they do not see this as an issue. Rather, the Milners (1918) argue that those jobs which are currently incentivized through threat should have to incentivize in other ways. On a similar vein, they too, suggest that labor will be incentivized through not providing all with luxuries (Milner & Milner 1918).

Following more clearly the logic of Bertrand Russell (1918), Senator Huey Long (1934) of Louisiana presented a radio address wherein he suggested a Universal Basic Income, among other reforms to the welfare system. He, like Russell, argued that there exists an inequality of opportunity and, therefore, freedom in capitalist societies that is unjust and requires attention. In his address, for example, Long (1934) states “...it is necessary to scale down the big fortunes, that we may scatter the wealth to be shared by all people” (para. 3). Long (1934) also makes the argument that the Declaration of Independence guarantees freedom and equality for all. He applies the definition of equality to mean that all should be guaranteed some level of comfort as well as the opportunity to make something of themselves. In order to then meet this requirement, Long (1934) suggests the top levels of wealth should be limited. With this limit, any money made beyond said limit would go into a fund. On top of guaranteeing a minimum

level of wealth as well as a few supplementary programs for, for example, the aged, the fund would provide a regular income (Long, 1934).

Finally, of this period, is the work of C.H. Douglas (1924) who published the book *Social Credit*. While technically earlier in the timeline than placed here, C.H. Douglas (1924) departs from all other authors both in this period and in the previous period. Specifically, C.H. Douglas (1924) proposes Universal Basic Income as a means of stabilizing the macroeconomy during periods of destabilization. That is, while other authors had concerned themselves with the system failures of, primarily, distribution, C.H. Douglas (1924) is concerned with the ability of the economy to recover during downturns. Thus, he proposes a Universal Basic Income to act as a, in some ways, automatic stabilizer whereby people will have liquidity despite a possible job loss. With that liquidity, then, aggregate demand can continue, and the economy will recover faster (Douglas 1924).

2.3 The Libertarian Swing

Contrary to the previous periods of popularity which were ushered in as a reaction to crises that brought to the forefront injustice, the period of popularity during the 1960s can largely be seen as a reaction to the developing literature on cash versus in-kind benefits, Keynesian economic policies, and the Johnson administration's expansion of the welfare state. In many ways, this period may best be described as one borne not out of having been faced with a humanitarian crisis but an ideological and theoretical war over

“progressive” movements and benefit delivery. Milton Friedman, of course, was the primary leader of this resurgence.

In his book *Capitalism and Freedom* as well as in his advisement to the Nixon administration, Friedman proposed the negative income tax (NIT) which would provide a credit to the impoverished (Friedman & Friedman 2002). Similar to a more modern Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), the proposal by Milton Friedman (2002) suggests paying a credit to those with zero dollars in earned income. However, by way of incentivizing labor and/or reducing the possible disincentivizing effect of withdrawing the credit in its entirety as earned income moves beyond zero, Friedman (2002) proposed a gradual withdrawal. Meaning, for example, if the base credit is determined to be \$20,000, as one begins to make an income beyond zero, the credit is not going to be removed entirely. If it were to be removed entirely, the effective marginal tax rate, meaning the rate at which one loses benefits in addition to the taxes paid on income, would be extremely high at the lowest levels of income. This, of course, could incentivize one to remain on the credit alone rather than seeking employment as it would be more lucrative to do so. Thus, instead, Friedman (2002) suggests gradually phasing out the credit which, effectively, means providing a partial payment to the recipients until one’s income more than surpasses the original, in this example, \$20,000 credit.

This proposal is notably different from that of the European social democrats and most of the proposals described previously. First, it is different in that the clear implication is that the problem to be solved is absolute poverty and that absolute poverty

is created out of a lack of employment. Because of the focus on incentivization of labor, of course, it can be assumed that Friedman (2002) believes the lack of employment to be an individual rather than a structural dilemma as, if it were structural, simply incentivizing participation would not make up for structural issues. Second, part of Friedman's (2002) agenda in providing the NIT solution is to make the U.S. welfare system more efficient and limit the government's reach. Friedman (2002) is clear in suggesting that the NIT replaces most, if not all, of the current welfare system. With that, then, the most efficient introduction of an NIT would go through existing taxation systems. Of course, these existing taxation systems require one to file taxes once yearly. Meaning, this proposal is likely to deviate from the proposals of European Social Democrats in that it is not likely to be a regularly made payment but rather a once yearly payment. Taken together, it is clear then that Friedman's ideological basis for his proposal is a heavily liberal one and his purpose was, at least in part, to steer the United States welfare system back in the direction of liberal ideology-seeing the Johnson expansion as movement away from markets.

Notably in this period, James Tobin and John Galbraith called for a form of Universal Basic Income like Friedman's conceptualization of the policy (Widerquist 2020). For example, in the 1970s, George McGovern ran against Richard Nixon and, in his campaign, proposed the "McGovern's Demogrant" which popularized a concept already in development (Lehto and Meadowcroft 2021). With Tobin as the advisor, the

demogrant is not unlike a negative income tax. McGovern's version was supposed to give all citizens \$1000 but, with it, a flat tax rate system (Lehto and Meadowcroft 2021).

A departure from these proposals, in the late 70s and early 80s, Alaska's Republican Governor, Jay Hammond created the Alaska Permanent income fund (Ranalli 2021). With a justification that echoed that of Thomas Paine and Thomas Spence, the argument was that all Alaskans share ownership of one of the state's oil reserves and should, thus, receive an equal share of the profits (Ranalli 2021). Since 1982, any Alaskan citizen who has lived in the state for at least one year has received a dividend from the fund ("History" 2022). This policy is one of the longest running UBI schemes and has been cited as an inspiration to more modern politicians like Hillary Clinton (Zamora 2017).

2.4 Modern Calls (2010s ish)

A diverse set of literature has since been established in more modern calls for a Universal Basic Income. With justifications ranging from economic freedom to revamped interest in a common inheritance to moral imperatives toward social and economic equality, the interest in UBI has remained relatively strong in the last few decades. Though there, again, is not necessarily one specific crisis to point to, this renewal period is likely a result of the modern and growing problems in capitalism that are being felt worldwide: inequality, instability, and the ecological crisis. As explained above, America is facing a serious inequality issue with a system of welfare that is failing to alleviate poverty or move the needle on issues of equality (both social and economic).

In their book *Basic Income: A Radical Proposal for a Free Society and a Sane Economy*, authors Parijs and Vanderborght (2017) argue for a UBI on the basis of economic freedom. Echoing calls like that of previous authors and supporters like Huey Long and, to some extent, Bertrand Russell, these authors argue that all individuals should have access to freedom of opportunity and the freedom of leisure (Parijs and Vanderborght 2017). Within their book, they also make note of potential positive ramifications for both the green and feminist movements (Parijs and Vanderborght 2017). Though they seem to discuss potential funding within the current economic system, some have referred to their work/ideas as being “accelerationist”, meaning with the purpose of moving away from capitalism (Zamora 2017).

Others call for a solution to the ecological crisis, alleviation of poverty and establishment of equality for race and gender. For example, author Buchs (2021) wrote an article wherein she argued that Universal Basic Income, along with the complement of Universal Basic Services, could be a path forward in reaching the criteria for sustainable welfare (Buchs 2021).

Chapter 3: Policy in Action- A Critical Review of Pilot Programs and Their Impact

Universal Basic Income has been tested on the local, state and national levels. The first of these experiments were launched in multiple cities in the U.S. and Canada in the late 1960s to early 1970s, approximately 50 years ago (Widerquist 2002). Much like the concept itself, however, experimentation largely fell out of favor until more recent years. Indeed, the last approximately six to ten years can be described as a windfall of pilot programs where experiments have exploded in popularity across the globe. From Brazil to Compton and Kenya to Denver, these programs have certainly succeeded in stirring conversations, attracting media attention, and, perhaps most importantly, sustaining the most recent wave of popularity. For example, the Finnish experiment which is arguably the most well-known experiment of all time, launched in 2017 (Kangas 2021). During the two years of the experiment and in the years to follow, this pilot received an outcry of international attention (Kangas 2021). Additionally, 2018 alone saw the launch of at least 20, local level pilot programs (Holder 2021). Each program launched, of course, having received considerable attention, prompting headlines like “Does Universal Basic Income Work...” (Glover 2022), “\$500 Payments Start to Flow in Chicago’s Guaranteed Basic Income Program” (Cherone 2022), and “Austin Becomes the First Texas City to Test a Taxpayer Funded Guaranteed Income Program” (Fetcher 2022)

3.1 Local-Scale Policy

As mentioned, there are multiple local programs currently underway across the world and within the United States. One such program is set in Denver, Colorado and is expected to release preliminary results in June of 2023 (Denver Basic Income Project (DBIP) n.d.). Called the Denver Basic Income Project (DBIP), this program is funded through private charity donations and the donations of its founder, Mark Donovan (DBIP n.d.). In collaboration with the Graduate School of Social Work at the University of Denver, the DBIP intends to study the impacts of providing cash transfers over a 12-month period to unhoused individuals residing in the metro Denver area (DBIP n.d.).

As detailed in their research proposal (2021) as well as on their website, the program has identified 820 participants, either individuals or families, and has separated them into three primary experimental groups (Center for Housing and Homelessness Research (CHHR) 2021). The first group is expected to receive a cash transfer of \$1,000 monthly over the 12-month period (CHHR 2021). The second group is expected to receive an initial lump-sum payment of \$6500, in addition to 11 monthly transfers of \$500 (CHHR 2021). The third and final group is expected to receive \$50 per month for their participation in the research project and is identified as being the experiment's control group. (CHHR 2021) Also detailed in their research proposal (CHHR 2021), is the process for identifying participants. Though their website included a link to an application which is no longer open (DBIP n.d.), the research proposal (CCHR 2021) suggests the study would be primarily enlisting the help of organizations that provide services to the homeless to identify and assist in screening possible individuals. An

additional document provided on their website suggests their criterion for participants is that they must be over the age of 18, live within Denver, are connected to an organization providing services that is collaborating with DBIP and are unhoused (CHHR 2022). Finally, the participants must pass a Basis-24 screening test to ensure that the participant will be able to participate despite possible mental health or substance abuse issues (CHHR 2022).

While there are no results currently available to the public, the DBIP has provided an extensive list of the research questions they intend to answer through a series of monthly questionnaires and “in-depth interviews” (CHHR 2021). With a total of 12 questions, the study seems primarily focused on the possible improvements to the well-being of its participants. For example, the study asks, “Do people who are unhoused and receive a guaranteed basic income experience improved interpersonal relationships, family dynamics, social support and social cohesion compared to a control group...?” (CHHR 2021 p. 3) among other questions which are focused on health, safety, an undefined measure of, presumably other, well-being and the reduction of poor health behaviors such as alcohol and substance use. In addition to these questions which make up the majority of the 12, the study (CHHR 2021) also asks about the participant’s ability to find more stable housing and the comparative outcomes of the two distributions of transfer, as outlined in describing the groups.

Another local program that is taking place in the United States is that of the “Compton Pledge” in Compton, California (The Compton Pledge 2021). Introduced in

2020 by Mayor Aja Brown and set to run for two years after participant selection, this pilot partnered with the Jain Family Institute who are said to provide research and assist in design (*Compton Pledge Fact Sheet* n.d.). Though the study has yet to publicly release results as, from 2021 press releases, the study should be concluding in the next few months, there are important details provided through the website as well as multiple press releases from the program, though, admittedly, these releases are not as extensive as in the Denver program.

Like the Denver program, this pilot is funded through private charity donations (*Compton Pledge Fact Sheet* n.d.). The website specifically states that it was a goal of the program to raise \$8 million to go toward the transfers made as well as, partially, the study itself (The Compton Pledge 2021). With that money, 800 residents of Compton California were set to participate, having been selected at random “from a pre-verified group of low-income Comptonians” (*Compton Pledge Fact Sheet* n.d. p. 4). It appears that this pre-verified group is a group of residents who were identified and had worked with local and other organizations that provided Covid-19 related transfers. The definition of “low-income” in this instance is those whose household income is less than 200% of the federal poverty line (*Compton Pledge Fact Sheet* n.d.). In addition to these criteria, the study has a stated intent of working toward racial and economic justice and has, thus, made clear its intent to also provide transfers to those who would otherwise be excluded from receiving traditional welfare benefits, such as illegal immigrants. The

program states “A social security number or ITIN is **not** required to receive a cash payment through the Compton Pledge” (*Compton Pledge Fact Sheet* n.d. p. 4).

Also as in the Denver program, it is clear the Compton program intends to vary the amounts and timing of payments, in addition to varying the mechanism for disbursing the payment. Under the “transfer amount” section, for example, the study stated that the payments would vary “but each participant will receive at least several hundred dollars, with greater amounts to parents with multiple children” (*Compton Pledge Fact Sheet* n.d. p 4). Regarding timing, the study (*Compton Pledge Fact Sheet* n.d.) suggests that participants will be informed of the timing they should expect prior to the outset of the program. Finally, as it relates to the mechanism for distribution, the Compton program (*Compton Pledge Fact Sheet* n.d.) has stated an intent to include participants who may be unbanked and is, thus, including three methods of receipt: direct deposit, electronic transfers such as Venmo and pre-paid cards, all of which will be accessed through the pilot's online platform (*Compton Pledge Fact Sheet* n.d. p. 5)

According to the last press release published by the study in April of 2021, the program had successfully identified the 800 participants (*Compton Pledge delivers...* 2021). In addition, it appears the program has surpassed their initial funding goal as they state, “A total of 9.1 million will be distributed in recurring payments over the next two years” (*Compton Pledge delivers...* 2021 p. 1). This final press release also gives preliminary statistics on the method of payments selected by the participants. They state, “To data, 50% chose direct deposit, 9% chose Venmo, 8% chose PayPal and 33% chose

prepaid cards” (*Compton Pledge delivers...* 2021 p. 1). Finally, the study concludes with quotes that reemphasize their primary intent which can be summarized as providing economic empowerment, uplifting a struggling community, and working against poverty through the lens of inclusivity and a specific focus on marginalized groups (*Compton Pledge delivers...* 2021)

From all of this and with the lack of a list of research questions, as in the Denver program, the exact answers one should expect from the program are vague. However, there is a clear motivation in varying payment, disbursement methods and timing to deliver insight on the design and structure of such a policy. In addition, it could be speculated from their multiple notes regarding the community’s racial makeup, an intent to include illegal immigrants, and the economic distress suffered by Compton as a whole, that the study intends to provide answers on well-being related questions. Of course, and as stated previously, however, these results have yet to be publicly released so this is mere speculation.

On top of the multitude of recent programs, including the two just described, the United States government also experimented with local level pilots many decades ago. Directed by the Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO) and continuing under the Department of Health Education and Welfare (HEW), these experiments were performed in the late 1960s and early 1970s (Levine, et.al. 2005). Four experiments, specifically, ran throughout various cities in the U.S. In addition, one experiment was performed in Canada (Widerquist 2002). Each of these experiments ran for different lengths of time,

had different sample sizes, transfer amounts and included various tested levels of effective marginal tax or, as Widerquist (2002) describes it, “take-back rates”. The table below, provided in a draft article by Karl Widerquist (2002), summarizes the various experiments well.

Table 1. Summary of the negative income tax experiments in the United States and Canada

Name	Site(s)	Data collection	Sample size		Sample characteristics	G*	t**
			Initial	(final)			
The New Jersey Graduated Work Incentive Experiment	New Jersey and Pennsylvania	1968-1972	1,216	(983)	Black, white, and Latino, 2-parent families in urban areas with a male head aged 18-58 and income below 150% of the poverty line.	.5, .75, 1.0, 1.25	.3, .5, .7
The Rural Income-Maintenance Experiment (RIME)	Iowa and North Carolina	1970-1972	809	(729)	Both 2-parent families and female-headed households in rural areas with income below 150% of poverty line.	.5, .75, 1.00	.3, .5, .7
The Seattle/Denver Income-Maintenance Experiments (SIME/DIME)	Seattle and Denver	1970-1976, (some to 1980)	4,800		Black, white, and Latino families with at least one dependant and incomes below \$11,000 for single parents, \$13,000 for two parent families.	.75, 1.26, 1.48	.5, .7, .7-.025y, 8-.025y
The Gary, Indiana Experiment	Gary, Indiana	1971-1974	1,799	(967)	Black households, primarily female-headed, head 18-58, income below 240% of poverty line.	.75, 1.0	.4, .6
The Manitoba Basic Annual Income Experiment (Mincome)	Winnipeg and Dauphin, Manitoba	1975-1978	1,300		Families with head younger than 58 and income below \$13,000 for a family of four.	\$3,800, \$4,800, \$5,800 ***	.35, .5, .75

* G = the Guarantee level(s). Guarantee levels for the U.S. Experiments are reported as a percent of the poverty line, in Canada they are presented in Canadian Dollars.

** t = the marginal tax rate or the “take back rate.”

*** Canadian dollars

Sources: Robins, Philip K., Robert G. Spiegelman, Samuel Weiner, and Joseph G. Bell, eds., (1980) *A Guaranteed Annual Income: Evidence from a Social Experiment*. New York: Academic press.

Feber, Robert and Werner Hirsch, 1978. “Social Experimentation and Economic Policy: A Survey.” *Journal of Economic Literature* 16: 1379-1414.

Hurn, Derek & Simpson, Wayne. 1993. “Economic Response to a Guaranteed Annual Income: Experience from Canada and the United States”. *Journal of Labour Economics* 11 (1), 263-296.

Figure 1: Table of NIT Experiments from Widerquist (2002)

As noted in the above, the experiments in the U.S. took place in New Jersey and Pennsylvania, Iowa and North Carolina, Seattle and Denver, and Gary, Indiana (Widerquist, 2002). A report from Mathematica Policy Research (1980) explains that participants in each study were separated into treatment and control groups. While the various treatment groups received different transfers and effective marginal tax rates, the control group only received small payments for their participation (Mathematic Policy Research 1980). Additionally, this report (Mathematica Policy Research 1980) details the reasoning behind the various locations of experiments. Namely, the New Jersey/Experiment represented primarily an urban population, the Iowa/North Carolina experiment studied impacts on rural populations, the Gary Indiana population studied impacts on single versus two-parent households, and the Denver/Seattle experiment was a result of the “unique structure of its labor market[s]” (Mathematica Policy Research 1980 p. 4). In those areas. On this late note, specifically, the authors of this report suggest that Seattle was chosen because the labor market of Seattle was dominated by one industry. In Denver, the “unemployment rate remained at or below the national average, it experienced a high rate of growth in total employment...” and it was “geographic[ally] similar to Seattle” (Mathematica Policy Research 1980 p. 4).

The column titled “G*” in the table above (Widerquist 2002), shows the various transfer amounts used between and within the experiments. The amount of transfer is represented here as a proportion of the Federal poverty line. Meaning, of course, all four U.S. experiments included a group provided with a transfer equivalent to 75% of the

Federal Poverty Line (Widerquist 2002). Three of the experiments also tested a transfer equivalent to the poverty line and one tested transfers above the poverty line. Given the intent of the NIT program to create an absolute floor for income, the transfer amounts were intended to be just sufficient to sustain a bare minimum subsistence while also providing incentive for those at the lowest levels of income to seek employment (Widerquist 2002). As quoted in the Widerquist (2002) article,

“A guarantee level of 1.0 or higher would eliminate poverty as defined by official statistics. The smaller the guarantee level is, the smaller the work disincentive and the smaller the cost of the program will be...” (Widerquist 2002 p. 5)

In the column title “t***”, Widerquist (2002) presents the various levels of effective marginal tax rates tested alongside the various transfer levels. With lower levels of tax rates such as the .3 tested in both the New Jersey/Pennsylvania experiment and the Iowa/North Carolina experiment, for example, the incentive to seek employment is higher as, in this case, the recipient would only be losing 30 cents for every dollar of income made from employment. On the other end, rates of .7 like the ones tested in Iowa/North Carolina and Denver/Seattle would provide less of an incentive to work given that the recipients would be losing 75 cents of the initial transfer for every dollar of income earned through employment. Of course, however, rates of .75 still represent a net gain for the individual as they would still be receiving .25 cents for every dollar made. Notably, in addition to the flat marginal tax rates, the experiments also tested non-linear “take-back rates” (Widerquist 2002). Specifically, in the Denver/Seattle program both non-linear marginal rates of “0.7 minus 0.025 times income and 0.8 minus 0.025 times

income” (Widerquist 2002 p. 6) were tested. Meaning, of course, that at lower levels of income, higher marginal tax rates would be in place before being replaced by lower rates as income increases.

The “Data Collection” column (Widerquist 2002) details the length of time each experiment was conducted. Interestingly, the Denver/Seattle program was originally intended to run for six years (Widerquist 2002). However, the program received an extension of 20 years for some of the participants to allow the researchers to study the long-term effects of NIT (Widerquist 2002). Despite this extension as well as the expectations of those select participants, however, the experiment was cancelled in 1980 (Widerquist 2002). Thus, the longest data collection period was a period of approximately 10 years. Data in all experiments were primarily collected through surveys and, often, performed on a quarterly basis (Mathematica Policy Research 1980).

The primary intent of these experiments was to study the impact of NIT on labor incentivization. Though it receives far less attention, some of the experiments also collected data on educational impacts and divorce rates. As summarized by (Levine, et.al 2005), the experiment broadly found “a 13 percent reduction of work effort for the family as a whole starting from an initial work effort of 35 hours per week for the entire family.” (Hollister 2005 p. 99). Notably, however, Hollister (2005) adds

“In most cases, the primary earner worked more hours than the secondary and tertiary earners and, therefore, when measured in percentage terms, there were relatively small responses from the primary earner” (p. 99).

In addition to family-wide labor responses, the studies also found a rather large reduction in the labor supplied by women in the household, primarily as a result of re-entering the labor force at slower rates following a leave. Hollister (2005) states about this,

“This labor supply response added about 25 percent to the static costs of a national program with a guarantee level approximately at the poverty line. You could look at these results as either half empty or half full. You could say that 25 percent is too much or not too much” (Hollister 2005 pp. 99-100).

To summarize these results in other words, the primary effect on labor was, perhaps, some reduction in the primary earner’s labor supplied, though, this was minimal. The most impactful effect was in the choices made by, primarily, mothers who had used the additional income to spend more time at home as well as teenagers in the household.

Hollister (2005) also details some of the non-labor results found. Regarding education, it seems the rural-focused experiment was the most fruitful experiment for data. This experiment seems to have shown positive impacts (Levine, et.al. 2005). Specifically, elementary through middle school students had improved attendance, teacher ratings, grades and test scores. Other experiments also showed positive improvements with, seemingly, improved education continuation and dropout rates. Regarding divorce rates, Hollister (2005) suggests that the early reporting on the experiment erroneously suggested that the Denver/Seattle program resulted in higher divorce rates. However, this result has since been contested by Glen Cain (1980) who reanalyzed data and published a report suggesting this was a false claim (Cain (1980) as cited by Hollister (2005)).

Despite these positive results, the NIT experiments have faced criticism from many authors, especially as it relates to the presentation of said results. In his summary of the NIT experiments, for example, Widerquist (2002) is critical of the complicated nature of the experiments. With that said, however, Widerquist believes the use of the labor supply impacts as reason to write off the program is simply a misrepresentation of the data as well as a misrepresentation of what can be answered by a social science experiment. He says, “But the meaning of these figures can be easily overblown.” (Widerquist 2002 p. 12) and “There is much more that the experiments cannot show than they can” (p. 12). Not limiting this to opponents, Widerquist (2002) also states,

“When the results were brought before Congress in the late 1970s, researchers failed to make the limits of their analysis clear giving the impression that the results were much more conclusive...” (p. v).

This sentiment of poor presentation and misrepresentation is echoed in Levine et. Al. (2005) wherein Williams (2005) states, “Although emphasis on sound data remains essential for reasoned policymaking, I have found over the years that there is more and more distortion of information and policy analyses.” (Williams 2005 p. 102)

In addition to criticism of presentation, researchers for the Finnish UBI experiment have suggested that the results themselves may be questionable (Kangas, et.al. 2016). In the preliminary report (2016) researchers provided government officials on various policy measures, as will be detailed to a greater extent below, the authors suggest that the use of self-reported data caused issues of incentive for the participants which make the results unreliable (Kangas, et.al. 2016). Specifically, the authors argue

that the participants of these experiments had an incentive to self-report lower levels of income to gain greater amounts of the transfer in addition to their employment income. The researchers state, “In the United States, the suspicion was that work income was underreported, which would naturally lead to biased results” (Kangas, et.al. 2016 p. 40)

3.2 State-Level Policy

While local level pilot programs have been the norm, there have occasionally been experiments of greater proportion- providing payments to a larger group, making transfers in greater amounts or running over a greater time period. For example, there is the policy that has been running in Alaska since the 1980s, which was briefly described in an earlier section. There is also a program called the “Eastern Band of Cherokees Casino Dividend” which provides participants with transfers that average between \$4,000 and \$6,000 and has been running since 1997 (Marinescu 2019). Both the Eastern Band of Cherokees as well as the Alaskan Permanent Income fund can also be differentiated from local level policies on their funding source. While most modern local policies have been funded through private charity donations, as seen in the above, the Alaskan program and the Eastern Band of Cherokees program are funded through revenues generated from a common good.

Established in 1997, the tribal community of the Eastern Band of Cherokees opened a casino using investments from the tribal fund on land in their tribal community in North Carolina (Lewis 2017). Despite regulatory obstacles in the gambling industry, this casino in North Carolina has been successfully generating profits for more than 20

years, largely as a result of a large tourist industry in the area (Lewis 2017). With this profit, the casino reinvests 50% and distributes 50% to tribal members in the form of a UBI. This 50% that is distributed to tribal members is distributed unconditionally, biannually and averages, as noted above, between \$4000 and \$6000 per payment (Marinescu 2019). There have, however, been particularly good years such as 2006 which saw dividend payments of approximately \$9,000 per payment (McFarland 2016). Still, even in difficult years, the payments made to tribal members seem to make up a significant portion of income. In 2009, for example, the amount distributed was equivalent to “eight percent of all personal income.” (Johnson, et.al. 2011 p. 20) The payment is also made universally, including to those members under the age of 18. Indeed, the payments made to all members under 21 or 18 provided the individual completes a high school education is held in a trust (Johnson, et.al. 2011).

Though there hasn't been much research on the program, there have been occasionally studies mainly done by universities. For example, in a report published by the business school at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (2011), the professors at UNC suggest that, compared to other regions across North Carolina, the region in the immediate area of the casino has reported decreasing levels of unemployment between the introduction of the dividend and 2010 (Johnson, et.al. 2011). The authors note that most of the employment trend is caused by growth in education and health industries (Johnson, et.al. 2011). Presumably, then, the increased employment does not seem entirely the result of the casino's opening and operations itself, though this too

is a contributor. The authors state, “Directly and indirectly, casino operation [has] reduced the historically high unemployment rate in Jackson and Swain counties which was 1.87 times the state average through 1997” (Johnson, et.al. 2011 p. iii). In addition to observational employment impacts, the authors suggest that the operation of the casino has helped to reduce seasonal fluctuations in employment and that the dividend has indirectly contributed to a local impact of \$12.6 million (Johnson, et.al. 2011). The latter of these claims seems to have been calculated on the assumption that 70% of income is disposable and, thus, available to be spent. Using this assumption, the authors calculate the added spending value of the dividends (Johnson, et.al. 2011).

In addition to this article, there have also been news reports to suggest the positive impact provided by the casino and its dividends. Beginning with anecdotal evidence, an article written by John Sutter (2015) wherein the author visited the area and spoke to residents, stated, “Kaitlin Blaylock, a debt-free 23-year-old who used the money to pay for her education “I honestly don’t think I would have been able to go to grad school without it,” she told me”, among other stories (As cited in Sutter 2015). The article then goes on to reference a Duke University professor Jane Costello who has suggested, through her long-term studies of children who had been receiving payments against those who hadn’t, that children receiving the payment and, therefore, being “lifted out of poverty” saw increased education through being a year ahead of those who did not, decreased behavioral problems and reduced instances of committing minor crimes (As cited in Sutter 2015). Finally, in a short paragraph from a seminar summary presented at

Wharton (2019), the author states “members who receive the casino dividend work the same number of hours as those who do not... have improved mental health and decreased addiction.” (Marinescu 2019 para. 4).

As briefly described in the previous section, the Alaska Permanent Income Fund was spearheaded by the then governor, Jay Hammond and disbursements from the fund began in the early 1980s (Ranalli 2021; “History” 2022). The fund is primarily the result of revenues generated out of the “largest oil field ever discovered in North America, Prudhoe Bay on the North Slope of the state of Alaska” (Goldsmith 2002 p.1) which inspired legislators at the time to allow all Alaskans to share in the benefits of a natural resource. Because of a constitutional amendment passed during the late 1970s, part of revenues from the state’s natural resources were placed in an investment account, and, from this, money is paid out to residents each year (Goldsmith 2002). The amount of the payment varies with earnings made on the investment account but, to overcome some of the variation, the fund stipulates that payments will be made on a five-year average and the government of Alaska regularly contributes money through appropriation to offset inflation (Goldsmith 2002).

To qualify for payment from the fund, one must be a resident of Alaska who has resided in the state for the previous year and intends to stay in the state (Goldsmith 2002). Much like the Eastern Band of Cherokees Casino Dividend, the payments are made universally and include children who receive payments through a trust (Goldsmith 2002). Though payment amounts have varied significantly over its forty years, the 2022

dividend was said to be \$3,284 (State of Alaska: Department of Revenue n.d.). According to Goldsmith (2002), the, presumably, 2002 payment was projected to be “about \$1,550” and “will be distributed shortly before the Christmas shopping season begins to about 9 per cent of the people living in the state, directly increasing total personal income in Alaska by about \$1.1 billion, or 6 per cent” (Goldsmith 2002 p. 6). In addition, according to Goldsmith (2002), the “PFD programme, which is the largest appropriation of state government (exceeding even primary and secondary education).” (p. 9)

In terms of the impact provided by the Permanent Income Fund, there, like the Eastern Band Casino Dividend, is a general lack of information and study. With that said, however, Goldsmith (2002) discusses some impacts of the annual payment on various aspects including labor supply. He states, “Initially there was some interest in the effect of the dividend on the supply of labour, but there have been no studies of this effect, which from casual observation appears to be small.” (Goldsmith 2002 p. 10). He then goes on to explain,

“This may partly be the result of the method distribution. Because it comes in a single payment at the beginning of the Christmas shopping season, consumers may be predisposed to view the PFD as a “gift” rather than as part of their regular income.” (Goldsmith 2002 p. 10).

In addition to these observations, Goldsmith states

“In spite of the potential effect on the average wage rate, it is safe to say that the dividend has had a dramatic effect making the distribution of income in Alaska among the most equitable in the United States.” (Goldsmith 2002 p. 11).

Updating information on the labor market effects, a study published in 2022 uses a modified difference-in-differences framework and data from the Current Population Survey to study the impact of the payment on employment (Jones & Marinescu 2022). Specifically, these authors use the method of Abadie et al (2010) to develop various control states and takes the weighted average for comparison in the difference-in-difference model (Jones & Marinescu 2022). The authors ultimately conclude that the fund payments had “a negligible impact...on extensive margin labor market outcomes” (Jones & Marinescu 2022 p. 327) and “an average increase in the part-time rate of 1.8 percentage points. This represents an increase of 17 percent relative to the average part-time rate in the pre-period.” (p. 328). “Extensive margin” in the previous sentence refers to results as they relate to employment and labor force participation.

3.3. National-Level Policy

Possibly the most well-known UBI experiment of all time is the national scale policy implemented in Finland in 2017. Like many before it, this program was set to run for two years, concluding in late 2019 (Kangas, et.al 2021). During its two-year run, the program provided 2,000 randomly selected unemployed residents in Finland with a partial basic income of 560 euros (Kangas, et.al 2021). In addition, the program identified a control group from the same pool of unemployed residents. This group would continue to receive their normal unemployment benefits (Kangas, et.al 2021). The selection of participants and group assignment was done by Kela, Finland’s largest provider of social welfare (Kangas, et.al. 2021). Those selected to be in the treatment group received their

partial basic income in place of their normal benefits. Though, if their normal benefits exceeded 560 euros, the difference was provided by Kela (Kangas, et.al. 2021). The UBI benefit was also not subject to taxes (De Wispelaere, et.al. 2018). Importantly, the bill which passed the experiment also included a mandatory participation clause, such that participants in either the control or treatment group could not self-select out of the program but as well be mentioned later, did not require participants to participate in survey-based data collection (Tuovinen 2021).

Somewhat unsurprisingly, the primary question to be answered by the experiment was the result of a UBI on the labor participation of recipients compared to the control group as well as the efficacy of suggesting a UBI would reduce the “bureaucracy” of Finland’s current system (Kangas, et.al., 2021). In addition to this question, researchers asked a variety of supplemental questions on subjective health and well-being including stress and mental health, among others (Simanainen & Tuulio-Henriksson 2021). As described in the book “Experimenting with Unconditional Basic Income” (2021), the evaluation of these research questions was separated into “four sub-studies” and involved “several researchers from different universities and research institutions in Finland” (Kangas, Jauhiainen, Simanainen, et.al 2021 p.3). Also described in the book is the evaluation decision to provide detailed testing plans prior to the commencement of the program. Data for these sub-studies was collected using national registers which provide data on demographic variables, income, receipt of benefits, employment, etc. and surveys in addition to several in-depth, face-to-face interviews (Kangas, et.al. 2021).

Results from well-being and health-focused studies show the treatment group consistently, though not often significantly, reporting better outcomes on several subjective dimensions (Simanainen & Tuulio-Henriksson 2021). For physical health, researchers asked participants about their perception of health, the presence of long-term illnesses and the use of medical services through number of visits. For mental health, researchers used a five-question index which asked respondents about “nervousness, inability to cheer up, calmness, melancholy, and happiness” (Simanainen & Tuulio-Henriksson 2021 p.74). The participants were also asked questions related to depression and loneliness. For mental abilities, the researchers asked questions to do with memory, ability to learn new things, and concentration. Finally, all participants were asked to score their general life satisfaction (Simanainen & Tuulio-Henriksson 2021).

The researchers found that on the physical health related indicators the treatment group indicated more often that they were in good health and less often that they were in poor health than the control group, though this wasn't statistically significant (Simanainen & Tuulio-Henriksson 2021). A similar result was found for reporting long-term illnesses. On hospital visits, the results were relatively similar across groups and statistically insignificant. For the mental health dimension, the five-question index revealed better outcomes for the treatment group, that were, again, statistically insignificant (Simanainen & Tuulio-Henriksson 2021). In addition, the researchers find that on indicators of depression the treatment group shows an insignificant lower prevalence. For the questions related to loneliness, the treatment group reports

significantly less feelings of loneliness, though the report notes that the prevalence of loneliness among both groups was generally low (Simanainen & Tuulio-Henriksson 2021). Finally, for questions related to cognitive abilities including memory, learning new things and concentration, the treatment group was found to have significantly higher self-evaluations on all three indicators (Simanainen & Tuulio-Henriksson 2021).

Results on whether the implementation of a UBI can be seen as producing the perception of less bureaucracy were inconclusive (Simanainen 2021). Most differences between the groups were statistically insignificant. The author of this sub-study, however, suggests that this result is not surprising due to the design of the experiment (Simanainen 2021). In particular, the author references the aforementioned feature of the experiment in which the difference between the provided UBI and the recipients' regular benefits were provided by Kela. As noted, Kela is the primary social welfare provider and can, thus, be seen as one of the primary sources of bureaucracy in the welfare program (Simanainen 2021). Due to the volume of participants who still had to interact with Kela and its systems in order to receive the full benefit amount, the authors suggest there was no reason to believe there would be a difference (Simanainen 2021).

Finally, as it relates to the paramount question of the study, the authors find what they describe as “modest” (p. 59) evidence in the affirmative (Ylikanno & Kangas 2021). This part of the study was based on comprehensive register data with the primary variable being the number of days of employment over the previous 12 months (Ylikanno & Kangas 2021). Though secondary variables were analyzed, the authors note that these

variables are less reliable. Overall, the authors suggest that the treatment group had increased their number of days in employment by six days compared to the control group (Ylikanno & Kangas 2021). Similarly, the authors find these results were strongest among parents and people who speak foreign languages. In addition to qualitative data on the employment effects provided through the national registry, the authors also provided an evaluation based on survey data which asked recipients about their perceptions of employment, ability to work and “confidence in finding new work” (Ylikanno & Kangas 2021 p. 60). While the survey data alluded to a greater positive impact than did the register data, the significance was lost entirely after controlling for various demographic variables (Ylikanno & Kangas 2021).

With the culmination of these, mostly, less than outstanding results to come out of the Finnish experiment, many concluded that the Finnish experiment was a failure and, thus by extension, UBI a failure. For example, international headlines read, “Finland’s “free cash” experiment fails to boost employment” (Henley 2019), “Finnish Finance Minister: “Case closed” for universal basic income” (Valero 2019), and “Finland basic income trial left people “happier but jobless” (Nagesh 2019), among many others. However, such conclusions and reporting has often missed the context of the experiment and the multiple obstacles to its design. In addition, reporting on the experiment and its results widely overlooked complicating factors that can be seen as challenging to the internal validity of the experiment. Some of these challenges, of course, have been clearly presented and repeated in multiple publications by those who had designed the

experiment, those who evaluated the experiment and other researchers. Yet, international media, especially, largely ignored these statements. In this regard, perhaps, the most accurate headline to be published was that which appeared in the New York Times, “Universal Basic Income Didn’t Fail in Finland. Finland Failed It.” (Jauhiainen & Makinen 2018).

One such challenge that has already been mentioned is the design of the program which produced inconclusive results as it relates to the perception of bureaucracy (Simanainen 2021). Another challenge presented by the evaluators of the employment effects was the introduction of the “Activation Model” in 2018 (Ylikanno & Kangas 2021). The authors of this study note that mid-way through the experiment, the government passed major reform that would place stricter conditions on regular employment benefits. Specifically, this policy required that unemployment benefits recipients must engage in employment or receive services, such as training or courses, from the employment offices, or their benefits would be cut by “4.65% for the next three months” (Jauhiainen, et.al. 2021 p. 52). This presented a major challenge to the internal validity of the experiment as this reform directly affected and added additional employment pressure on a large proportion of the control group, 63% and, to a lesser extent the treatment group, 47% (Jauhiainen, et.al. 2021). In addition, the authors note that the introduction of this policy may well have impacted results on well-being as “The treatment group knew that they were better off, which might have increased their well-

being, whereas the activation model might have negatively affected the well-being of the control group” (Jauhiainen, et.al. 2021 p. 53).

It is also noted by evaluators of the experiment that their results should be interpreted while considering the possibility of attrition, selection bias, and the Hawthorne effect (Jauhiainen, et.al. 2021). The latter being defined as a participant changing their behavior not as a result of the treatment being applied but as a result of participation. The authors suggest that this was potentially an issue because the treatment group was made aware of and even, in some cases, received media attention because of their participation (Jauhiainen, et.al. 2021). On the former, the authors note that while participants were required to participate in the study, they were not required to participate in survey data collection (Jauhiainen, et.al. 2021). Attrition, of course, being defined as those not participating in the surveys having vastly different experiences than those who did participate and selection bias being the likelihood that one participates in data collection being related to the impacts they present. Though the authors attempt to overcome some of these limitations, response rates to the survey-based data collection were extremely low (Jauhiainen, et.al. 2021). The authors note that 31% response in the treatment group and 20% responded in the control group (Jauhiainen, et.al. 2021 p. 51).

In other articles, members of the original research team have suggested additional issues related to the internal validity of the experiment. For example, in an article published at the Center for Economic Studies and Institute for Economic Research (CESifo), authors De Wispelaere, Halmetoja and Pulkka (2018) argue that the treatment

of the UBI as non-taxable against the taxable benefits provided to the control group, “introduces distortion that affect the internal validity of the experiment” (p. 16). In addition, these authors make comment on the earlier mentioned introduction of the “Activation Model” by the Finnish government. The authors state,

“The present government does not appear to see the contradiction in simultaneously rolling out an unconditional basic income experiment and introducing a new sanctions regime for the unemployed” (De Wispelaere, Halmetoja, & Pulkka 2018 p. 17).

Beyond experimental design, data collection, the introduction of policies which, at the very least, muddied the interpretation of results, as well as other concerns of internal validity, the experiment also underwent multiple obstacles in the process of design and implementation which largely were not reported on in the mainstream media (De Wispelaere, Halmetoja, & Pulkka 2019). Indeed, as noted by Wispelaere, Halmetoja and Pulkka (2018), “Ignoring the political context and its constraints from the outset meant the dominant narrative set expectations sufficiently high to ensure that the experiment was doomed to fail as soon as it entered the design phase.” (p. 17).

The Finnish UBI experiment was initiated by the Finnish government and announced in late 2015 (Kangas 2021). After announcing their intent to experiment with alternatives to the current system, the government elected a group of researchers to provide a detailed report and, ultimately, conclusions on the best policy for experimentation (Kangas 2021). As noted in the original research report (2016), the government insisted that the policy to be experimented with must produce labor

incentivization, must be budget neutral, and must be ready for implementation within a strict timeline (Kangas, et.al. 2016). In their research report, the original group details multiple alternative policy measures, three of which were a full basic income, a negative income tax, and a partial basic income (Kangas, et.al. 2016).

To begin, the authors discuss the primary causes of disincentivization created out of the current Finnish system (Kangas, et.al. 2016). Namely, the authors suggest that the combination of unemployment benefits in addition to housing benefits and childcare benefits provided to, especially, single parents create high effective marginal tax rates and participation rates that create a disincentive to take up work at low levels of income (Kangas, et.al. 2016). Here, the effective marginal tax rates are defined as being the rate at which benefits are reduced in addition to taxes paid as earned income from employment increases. Similarly, the participation rates referred to by the authors are, essentially, the effective marginal tax rates as just described but in moving one's earned employment income from zero to non-zero. As displayed in both the original research report and the later book (Kangas, et.al. 2016; Kangas, et.al. 2021), the effective marginal tax rates and participation rates for a single individual and a single parent under the current system are below.

Change in wages	Model 1. Existing legislation
<i>Single person</i>	
€0 → €500	36.9%
€0 → €1000	51.7%
€0 → €2000	66.3%
€1000 → €2000	80.9%
<i>Single parent</i>	
€0 → €500	29.3%
€0 → €1000	42.0%
€0 → €2000	70.3%
€1000 → €2000	98.7%

Figure 2: Effective Marginal Tax Rates and Participation Rates from Kangas et al. (2016)

With the intent to solve the issues as it relates to these effective rates while balancing a budget constraint, the authors ran multiple simulations on each of the various policy measures examined in their report (Kangas, et.al. 2016). Regarding a full basic income, the author suggested that the tax rates required to remain in budget neutrality would increase the effective marginal tax rates and the participation rates for all scenarios aside from moving one's income from 1000 euros to 2000 euros (Kangas, et.al. 2016). They note, however, that in their simulations a full UBI would reduce income inequality,

and significantly decrease poverty, especially for children but not for the elderly (Kangas, et.al. 2016). The partial basic incomes tested in their report also required higher levels of taxation, though much less than the ones in the full basic income to remain budget neutral. The authors present simulations of tax rates and UBI amounts that suggest a budget neutral tax system would, in most instances, marginally reduce the effective marginal rates (Kangas, et.al. 2016). The authors note that “A cost-neutral model would not automatically lead to more work incentives” (Kangas, et.al. 2016 p. 55). They also present the case of remaining under the current tax structure with a partial UBI and show that this system would significantly reduce the effective rates. This partial basic income, however, would not produce the same socially beneficial results such as a reduction in income inequality as would the full UBI (Kangas, et.al. 2016).

In addition to their simulations on UBI’s at various rates, the authors also run simulations on a negative income tax (Kangas, et.al. 2016). The authors find that a higher-level negative income tax at least at low-income participation rates outperforms a basic income of the same level as it relates to the labor incentivization goal. Notably, the same cannot be said for the lower level of negative income tax (Kangas, et.al. 2016). With this as well as their previous criticisms of the U.S. based NIT experiments and an inability to have updated tax information until 2019, then, the authors conclude that the NIT is not the most effective policy measure to pursue. They state, “In technical terms, negative income tax would be too difficult to implement as part of a basic income

experiment without an income register or it would at least require a substantial input from the Finnish Tax Administration.” (Kangas, et.al. 2016 p. 53)

With all of their simulations and considerations, then, the authors of the report suggested that three levels of partial basic income associated with three tax levels should be tested (Kangas 2021). At the same time, the authors suggested to the government that the sample would need to be nationally representative and would need to include over sampling of certain areas to study community effects (Kangas 2021). In addition to a nationwide sample, the authors suggested that certain groups, such as low-income people, should have their own sample as well as control groups so to understand their group specific impacts. Finally, the group suggested that the ideal sample size would include 10,000 participants but that would require an additional investment by the government (Kangas 2021).

After producing their research results and the crafting of a bill to meet the timeline requirements of implementation, however, the UBI presented by researchers and the one eventually put in place were far from each other (Kangas 2021). Running into legal obstacles that prevented them from testing multiple levels of a UBI, budget and timeline issues that ultimately led to testing only among the unemployed and significantly fewer people, and the tax administration dropping out leading to testing a UBI that would not meet cost-neutrality and, thus, be unsuitable for full-scale implementation as well as favorable tax treatment for the treatment group, the authors suggest in their later book (Kangas 2021), “compared with inspiratory expectations of the experiment and given the

optimal design outlined in the preliminary feasibility report, the proposed bill and final act were a great disappointment for many” (p. 32). In addition, when the legislation came to pass, the experiment was presented to a supporter of UBI, the legislator said, “This is a partial basic income experiment in the same sense as a fork is a partial meal...” (As cited in Kangas 2021 p. 3).

Combining the obstacles to implementation with the unforgiving timeline of the government as well as the earlier mentioned limitations in design, data collection and concerns for internal validity, the Finnish UBI experiment was a disaster. To add to the earlier legislator's comment, this experiment may, in hindsight, be described as a partial basic income pilot in the sense that a fleeting thought about dinner is a partial meal.

Chapter 4: Theory, Ethics, and Work

There are a number of criticisms levied against UBI related to, for example, the distributional impact of various structures, the taxation level required for financing given a set of budgetary and/or otherwise superimposed restrictions, and the extent to which a UBI improves various, measurable outcomes. While these are certainly important questions to explore, their answers are often more definitive or, at the very least, more easily resolved through empirical evidence. What is not, however, straightforward are questions related to the assumptions used in calculations, experimentation, and proposals. For example, though it is beyond the scope of this paper, the case for budget-neutrality which seems to imply the current level of spending is sufficient and/or desirable could be debated.

Indeed, it is the presence of questions outside of the realm of empirical evidence that form the basis of arguments by Bru Lain (2021) and Karl Widerquist (2018) who suggest moving beyond pilot programs and caution in the interpretation of pilot results, respectively. In discussing interpretation, for example, Widerquist (2018) states,

“Social science experiments can produce useful information, but they cannot answer the big questions that most interest policymakers and voters, such as does UBI work or should it be introduced” (p. 2).

Likewise, Lain (2021) makes the argument that enough pilots have been performed to provide sufficient evidence for empirically answerable questions. With

that, then, Lain (2021) suggests that continuing to produce pilot programs does nothing more than distract from the ethical questions that must be tackled if UBI is to ever move forward. Lain (2021) states, "...the main justification for UBI stems from ethical arguments that need not (and cannot) be empirically tested" (p. 634).

One such big, pressing, and empirically unanswerable question is that of labor disincentivization. In fact, the UBI labor issue may be, and arguably is, the first and most paramount ethical question to tackle as evidenced by its appearance and reappearance throughout the historical development, its central role as the primary outcome variable in multiple pilots, and its position as one of, if not the, primary differentiator between party lines.

As demonstrated previously, for example, libertarians implicitly or explicitly require work through outright mandates and tying benefits to labor market participation. Contemporary European social democrats, on the other hand, make no such qualifier and, indeed, state that a UBI must come without work or means-testing. In the work of the proposers, labor appears as far back as one of the originals, Thomas Spence (1796), and reappears, at least explicitly, in the works of John Stuart Mill (as cited in Parijs and Vanderborght 2017 and Torry 2021), Bertrand Russell (1918), the Milners (1918), C.H. Douglas (1924), Milton Friedman (2002), and Parijs and Vanderborght (2017). Finally, for its role in pilot programs, labor leads among all other outcomes as the variable of interest. In the Finnish experiment, for instance, the Finnish government's primary goal was to eliminate disincentivizations to labor (Kangas, et. al. 2016). And it was the results

in this regard that led many to conclude the experiment and, thus, the policy itself was a failure (Henly 2019; Valero 2019; Nagesh 2019). Similarly, it was the labor market impacts that motivated the NIT experiments and caused controversy in their interpretation. With all of this in mind, then, it is clear that labor is as central to UBI as is the cash element. It is the most pressing issue to tackle and one which requires moving beyond empirical evidence.

Of course, as seen in some of the results of the pilot programs- despite their various shortcomings as discussed, it can be fairly well agreed that a UBI would have some disincentivizing effect on labor market participation. As noted in the NIT experiments, for example, there was an approximately 13% reduction in family-wide labor hours, primarily the result of women and teenager's participation (Hollister 2005). The Finnish experiment also did not find significant improvements to the labor market disincentivization already present in their system (Ylikanno & Kangas, 2016). At the same time, most proposals that deal with labor suggest that there may be some element of disincentivization. One common theme that implies this, for example, is the recognized necessity and/or effect of inverting the wage system. Multiple proposers seem to share in the belief that those in low wage jobs would be sufficiently disincentivized from participation at the current wage rate and, thus, would need to be incentivized beyond current levels. But what effect a UBI would have on labor is not the primary question of interest. As demonstrated, this question alone can, quite simply, be answered through

empirical work or, for a lack of better wording, common sense. Rather, the paramount question is: is labor disincentivization acceptable and, in some cases, even preferable?

4.1 Commodification, De-Commodification, and The Role of The State

In his most famous work, *The Great Transformation*, Karl Polanyi (1944) provides a historical development of the market economy and, in doing so, comparative, historical evidence to suggest that the presence of a self-regulating, market economy is a decisive break from any other period in human history. He states,

“No society could, naturally, live for any length of time unless it possessed an economy of some sort; but previously to our time no economy has ever existed that, even in principle, was controlled by markets.” (p. 45).

It is within this break, also, that Polanyi roots his primary criticisms of the market economy- “fictitious commodities” and finds the basis for his argument that this unique organization of economy and society has and will continue to result in crisis, the “double movement”.

For Polanyi (1944) the primary differentiator between pre-capitalist and capitalist societies is in the power and position held by markets. Arguing that prior to the development of the market economy the position of markets was secondary to social relations, Polanyi provides an account of multiple, pre-capitalist societies and their organization. He points to, for example, the principles of redistribution and reciprocity found within social relations which served as a means of shaping economic activity. He states, “But how, then, is order in production and distribution ensured? The answer is provided in the main by two principles of behavior not primarily associated with

economics: reciprocity and redistribution.” (Polanyi 1944 p. 49-50) The primary point Polanyi (1944) is making is that, unlike the current period, social relations were first, and the economy was second. With this, then, the economy was necessarily controlled by society.

In the break to a self-regulating, market economy, however, Polanyi (1944) suggests that social relations and, thus, society becomes secondary to the markets, primarily through the [over]reach of commodities dictated and/or mandated by the market economy³. Rather than the rules of society shaping markets, the markets shape society through their commodification of the very fabrics of society. Polanyi (1944) states, “A market economy must comprise all elements of industry, including labor, land, and money” (p. 74). However, Polanyi (1944) is clear to argue these “elements of industry” are, at their root, that which makes up and allows for the existence of society. He says, “[...]But labor and land are no other than the human beings themselves of which every society consists and the natural surroundings in which it exists” (Polanyi 1944 p. 75).

Because the market society necessarily subverts these and all other “elements of industry”, land, labor and money become, in the words of Polanyi (1944), “fictitious commodities”. Defining a commodity as that which is produced for the purpose of sale, Polanyi (1944) argues that “every element of industry is regarded as having been

³ Though, Polanyi (1944) does suggest that the state played a key role in forcing labor commodification as will be discussed later in the chapter.

produced for sale, as then and then only will it be subject to the supply-and-demand mechanism interacting with price” (p. 75). This, of course, includes land, labor and money. However, Polanyi (1944), using his definition of commodity as being produced for sale, states “But labor, land, and money are obviously *not* commodities; the postulate that anything that is bought and sold must have been produced for sale is emphatically untrue in regard to them.”. (pg. 75).

Indeed, Polanyi (1944) makes the case that to treat land, labor and money, as a commodity- as being produced for sale, is not only fictitious but diminishes their nature.

For example, Polanyi (1944) says,

“For the alleged commodity “labor power” cannot be shoved about, used indiscriminately, or even left unused, without affecting also the human individual who happens to be the bearer of this peculiar commodity. In disposing of a man’s labor power the system would, incidentally, dispose of the physical, psychological, and moral entity “man” attached to the tag” (p. 76).

In these statements it is also clear that Polanyi (1944), believes this commodification diminishes the nature of land, labor and capital to such an extent that it is unpalatable and immoral. In fact, in writing the introduction to *The Great Transformation*, Fred Block states, “There are two levels to Polanyi’s argument. The first is a moral argument that it is simply wrong to treat nature and human beings as objects whose price will be determined entirely by the market” (p. xxv).

With the commodification and subversion of the very essence of humans and society, then, Polanyi describes the “double movement”. He suggests that humans, the laboring class, will necessarily resist the stripping of their essence through their

commodification. As such, this group will fight for “social protection”. At the same time, however, the markets and proponents of the markets will continue their onward march of “economic liberalism” which, given the above, necessarily contradicts those goals of “social protection”. A classic power struggle, these opposing forces with antithetical goals have and will necessarily result in crisis. Polanyi (1944) states, “It was out of such a perilous deadlock that in the twentieth century the fascist crisis sprang.” (p. 140).

Interestingly, the only power which would seem able to resolve this double movement, at least to an extent, the state is characterized by Polanyi (1944) as having been a critical force, though perhaps unknowingly, in the development of the market economy and the market system. Polanyi (1944) describes the various actions of the state in the early stages of capitalism and suggests it was these that eventually forced the commodification of labor, specifically. First, Polanyi (1944) discusses the Speenhamland system and suggests that this system prevented the creation of the labor market. Within the Speenhamland system, for example, was the idea of the “right to live”. However, as Polanyi (1944) states, “To later generations nothing could have been more patent than the mutual incompatibility of institutions like the wage system and the “right to live” ...” (p.85). After the abolition of Speenhamland, as already described, the state began adopting a patchwork system of “poor laws”. As Polanyi (1944) states, “The Poor Law Reform of 1834 did away with this obstruction of the labor market: the “right to live” was abolished” and “many of the most needy poor, it was true, were left to their fate as outdoor relief was withdrawn...” (p. 86)

Since the writings of Karl Polanyi (1944), the idea of commodification and the state's role in general but, specifically, in either perpetuating that commodification or intervening to de-commodify has been further expounded. One such particularly influential work that draws on Polanyi and continues this line of thought is *The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism* by Gosta Esping-Andersen (1990). To begin this work, Esping-Andersen (1990) details a sociopolitical evolution of and theoretical basis for the development of a welfare state and, moreover, the development of differing welfare states across the world. Within this, Esping-Andersen discusses four primary theories on the reason for a welfare state's development which all lead to slightly different conclusions about the purpose of the state. For example, Esping-Andersen (1990) states

“One variant begins with a theory of industrial society... that industrialization makes social policy both necessary and possible- necessary because pre-industrial modes of social reproduction...are destroyed by the forces attached to modernization... The crux of the matter is that the market is no adequate substitute.” (p. 13).

All of this is to mean, the welfare state is necessary because previous forms of social protection, like those found in pre-capitalist societies, are diminished in a market society. Thus, the provision of social welfare and protection which once was in the hands of the community itself, is now up to the state. Of course, then, the state plays an intervening and protective role.

Another theory presented, along a similar line to the previous, is the “new structuralist Marixis[t]”. This theory takes the approach of class conflict, deriving a view of capitalism as proletariats against capitalists from Marx's work. Yet, the role played by

the welfare state in this theory is different from that of the previous. While this theory suggests a lack of stability created out of the development of capitalism, it concludes that the state will serve to stabilize relations rather than intervene within them. In this way, the state can be seen as promoting and/or at least continuing the markets and capitalism (Esping-Andersen 1990). The other two theories mentioned by Esping-Andersen (1990) primarily center on democracy, voting, and class mobilization within a democracy. These theories suggest that welfare states and their developments depend on those who hold power and, thus, their focus more readily lends itself to a slightly different role for the state- a role of either supporting and upholding or influencing the structure of power within society.

With this background in mind, Esping-Andersen (1990) proposes moving beyond the analysis of comparative welfare on the basis of social spending levels alone. Rather, Esping-Andersen (1990) suggests and develops an analysis based on two primary functions of that spending, found, as seen above, within the theories of development: de-commodification and social stratification. Essentially, Esping-Andersen asks to what extent does the state reduce the reliance on the market mechanism and to what extent does the state change the social structure of power. As it relates to de-commodification, specifically, Esping-Andersen (1990) states “The mainsprings of modern social policy lie in the process by which both human needs and labor power became commodities and, hence our well-being came to depend on our relation to the cash nexus” (p. 35). And

“De-commodification is therefore a process with multiple roots. It is, as Polanyi argued, necessary for system survival. It is also a precondition for a tolerable level of individual welfare and security. Finally, without de-commodification workers are incapable of collective action.” (p. 37).

Within this analysis, then, Esping-Andersen (1990) develops three primary groups of welfare states which all follow various narratives that shape their position on decommodification and social stratification: liberal, conservative, and social democratic.

Implied within his work, of course, is the idea that higher levels of decommodification and lower levels of social stratification produce positive outcomes and should be the goal for which to strive. Indeed, Esping-Andersen (1990) criticizes the liberal narrative- that which motivates Anglo-Saxon welfare states, for its overly positive view of markets as a source of freedom. Esping-Andersen (1990) states,

“Within the market the liberal dogma of freedom appears justified: the worker can freely choose between alternative utilities, jobs... and leisure tradeoffs. But Marx and Polanyi and, more recently, Lindblom (1977) are correct in arguing that it is a freedom behind prison walls...” (p. 36-37).

As it relates to social stratification, Esping-Andersen suggests that the liberal narrative of market power and the idea of little state intervention that follows simply works to reproduce and uphold market inequalities. Esping-Andersen (1990) also suggests that this reproduction leads to stigmatization of the poor and class-dualism- the pitting of one class against another.

Beyond the realm of labor, the concept of de-commodification can also be applied to any policy which reduces the reliance on or the power of the market mechanism. For example, the, especially Scandinavian, government tendency to provide services like

childcare or higher education can be seen as a form of de-commodification- though perhaps not in the strict Polanyian sense. Providing the service through government or state sponsored mechanisms, of course, reduces citizens' need to enter market exchange for the provision of those services. Anglo-Saxon countries, as mentioned above, tend to score low on de-commodification for labor and beyond. The United States, for example, upholds the market in many other areas such as: healthcare, higher education, childcare, and more.

With the theoretical framework of commodification, de-commodification and social stratification in mind, UBI has some potential to improve the role and function of the state in, especially, Anglo-Saxon welfare states. Depending on the proposer, many UBI proposals are clear in their intent to upset the current structure of social stratification and to, at least some extent, de-commodify. For example, Bertrand Russel (1918) makes clear in his argument that a UBI should provide freedom of opportunity and leisure for all, not just the wealthier class. Suggesting, of course, that Russel (1918) intends, with his proposal, to change inequalities created by the market mechanism and, thus, to upset the current structure of social stratification. Along a similar vein, Huey Long (1934) justifies his argument on the basis of freedom and equality of opportunity- again, pointing to the need for changing social stratification. Finally, UBI pilot programs, like the Compton Pledge, recognize the structural role in creating poor outcomes for Compton residents and intend, with their program, to upset these inequalities (*Compton Pledge Fact Sheet, n.d.*).

In terms of de-commodification power, proposals like that of Thomas Spence (1796) and Joseph Charlier (1848) intend to reduce the market for private property through holding property in common while also providing people with an income, outside of the market, that is sufficient to provide for needs. With this, then, proposals along these lines are attempting to reduce the power of the market mechanism for both labor and land. Similarly, Bertrand Russel (1918) intended his proposal to reduce the reliance on the labor market. Indeed, Russel (1918) suggests that a UBI should remove the threat of starvation which requires one to enter into the labor market in the first place. Finally, modern proposals like that of Van Parijs and Vanderbrought (2017), echo similar calls for freedom and a reduction of the power of the labor market mechanism. This quality of de-commodification power, however, would exclude proposals that have similar intents but do not meet a level of sufficiency- a level which would provide an alternative to the market.

Despite the intent of these various proposals to de-commodify labor and/or land through providing a wage outside of paid employment and/or reducing private property, the basic characteristic of UBI as a cash transfer serves to uphold the market mechanism. That is, while some choices outside of markets may be provided as it relates to labor or land, the cash transfer of a UBI ensures that the recipient would still be required to interact with markets to receive their needs. As Ian Gough (2004) puts it, "...wealth and commodities are in most cases a means to achieving welfare, not ends in themselves..." (p. 16). Though Gough (2004) makes a much more nuanced argument about human

needs, the basic suggestion that wealth is a means to end holds in this instance. Providing recipients with a cash transfer so that they may then provide themselves with needs is not the same as providing one with their needs and, moreover, it does not hold the same de-commodifying power.

On the other end of the UBI spectrum, there are proposals and pilots which not only prefer the market mechanism in the above sense but have no intent to de-commodify even labor or land. At the same time, many of these proposals can be seen as preferring the social stratification created by the market mechanism. For example, proposals coming from the Libertarians clearly suggest means-testing and implicit or explicit work requirements. On the former, the implication is that poverty is the fault of the impoverished individual and absolute poverty can be prevented but, owing to who is at fault, there is no reason to further upset the structure of wealth and power. Perhaps most clearly represented in the proposal by the Milners (1918), the Milners (1918) suggest that poverty is the fault of the male breadwinner and that only for the sake of the children of those who are impoverished should the state intervene to provide a shield against absolute poverty. They state, “We are well aware that children cannot choose to whom they will be born, so that we cannot hold them responsible for the success or failure of their fathers in earning money.” (p. 4) and, in suggesting the size of benefit, the Milners (1918) state it should be “just sufficient to maintain life and liberty if all else fails.” (p.7).

As it relates to work-requirements, Milton Friedman (2002) and other libertarian proposals do not intend to de-commodify labor. In fact, these proposals can be seen as

further empowering the market mechanism and attempting to commodify labor. Friedman's (2002) proposal, for example, would supplement earned income at the lowest levels so as to incentivize labor. At the same time, in the Nixon proposal, work was outright required. Similarly, in the negative income tax pilot programs, the decrease in labor participation created primarily out of the actions of secondary and tertiary earners, has sometimes been portrayed as a failure. Finally, the Finnish program was intended to re-incentivize labor and was considered a failure for its poor results along these lines. Taken together, all of these had a very different intent as it relates to labor than did other proposers. These proposals and pilots wanted to reinforce the market mechanism for labor not attenuate it.

4.2 Fighting to be Imprisoned- Women and Unpaid Labor

While the idea of de-commodification as a positive responsibility of the state in protecting citizens, specifically laborers, is not rejected by feminist theory, the invisibility of women and the role of the family assumed by these analyses is a source of criticism and contestation. In Polanyi's (1944) writings of commodification, for example, labor and work within the capitalist system is confined to that which garners a wage. Thus, to de-commodify one's labor presumes a direct relationship between person and market, work and wage. Though this is not necessarily the fault of Polanyi (1944) or writers speaking on the topic of de-commodification as such invisibility of domestic labor and the role of the family is more a structural issue inherent in the wage system, the attention

to women and the role of the family in discussions surrounding de-commodification and welfare is a necessary precursor to equity, inclusivity, and reform.

In her book, *The Problem with Work: Feminisms, Marxism, Antiwork Politics, and Postwork Imaginaries*, Kathi Weeks (2011) recounts and analyzes the 1970s wages for housework movement among certain feminist writers. Detailing this movement, Kathi Weeks (2011) discusses the idea of the “social factory” as used by Dalla Costa and James (1973). Weeks (2011) explains that while some orthodox Marxist theorists would resist the idea of reimagining domestic labor in the same sense as waged labor, due to the lack of surplus value created, the conceptualization of the “social factory” insists upon the idea that domestic labor produces surplus value directly and, as such, should be included and recognized as a necessary component of capitalist production. As Weeks (2011) states,

“The theory of the social factory rests on the idea that beyond the factory, what Dalla Costa and James sometimes called “the community” or society itself, is involved in capitalist relations. The concept thus signals an alternative to theories that isolate capitalist production in times, spaces, and relations of waged labor.” (p. 120-121).

In addition to redefining or reimagining the conceptualization of labor and who is performing it, the concept of the social factory is also meant to draw attention to the invisibility of the family’s institutional role in supporting the wage system and the welfare state. The family plays a crucial role in reproducing waged labor and, as a result, depressing the wage. At the same time, the family plays a redistributive role, ensuring the

welfare of those disconnected from the labor market and the employer-sponsored elements of the welfare system. As explained by Weeks (2011),

“[...]the family serves to keep wages lower, and hours longer than they would be if the general assumption were that individuals needed either to be able to secure commodified equivalents to the goods and services produced within the private household or[...]to produce the goods and services themselves.” (p. 121) and “[...]Dalla Costa reminds us of the ways in which the institution of the family not only helps to absorb reductions in the price of labor [...]but also provides the ideological basis for reliving the state and capital from responsibility for much of the cost of social reproduction.” (p. 121)

As an extension of the social factory, then, wages for housework were demanded.

In some sense, as explained by Weeks (2011), this demand was meant less as a serious bid for reform and more as a call for redefining labor, an invitation to redefine the solution to women’s unpaid labor, and a call for attention. Essentially, while this call seems to be encouraging further commodification and a further solidification of the market mechanism as omnipotent, the purpose was, first, to redefine domestic labor as work rather than a “labor of love” and, second, as a pathway through which it could be refused. Using the language of commodification and de-commodification, then, the purpose was to recognize it as a commodity so that it could be de-commodified. Indeed, as described in Weeks (2011), “In this context, then, calling domestic labor “work” was not meant to elevate it but was imagined rather as “the first step towards refusing to do it” (Frederici 1995, 191)”. (p.124). As an alternative to certain solutions, it is explained that the movement towards placing women in more waged employment does little for refusing work. Rather, entering into waged labor adds more work through waged

employment in addition to domestic responsibility. As cited in Weeks (2011), “Slavery to an assembly line is not a liberation from slavery to a kitchen sink” (Dalla Costa and James 1973, 33)” (p. 124). Finally, as it relates to the role of the family, the purpose in demanding wages for housework was to, in many ways, remove the cloak of invisibility.

In concluding her discussion on this movement from the 1970s, Weeks (2011) adds an important dimension to this idea of reimagining domestic labor and the role of the family. She states that in our post-industrialized economy, one which is ever moving in the direction of services, the lines between traditionally defined work and non-work are even more blurred than they previously were. Thus, a reconceptualization is, in some ways, even more pressing now. Weeks (2011), says

“The point I want to emphasize here is that in the shift from Fordism to Post-Fordism these tendencies have multiplied and amplified. As a consequence [...] the difference between production and reproduction and between work and nonwork becomes increasingly obscure, as the same task could be either wages or an unwaged activity” (p. 142).

Though it is very much not a topic of conversation in his first book, Esping-Andersen (1999) also takes up this issue of gender-bias and family blindness in de-commodification and the role of the state. Adding to his previous analysis of welfare states along the lines of social stratification and de-commodification, Esping-Andersen (1999) suggests a third dimension of analysis, de-familialization. As Esping-Andersen (1999) defines it, “A familialistic welfare regime is therefore one that assigns a maximum of welfare obligations to the household.” (p. 45). Esping-Andersen (1999) suggests that the unpaid labor performed by women limits their ability to interact with the market

mechanism and, thus, the ways in which a welfare state treats the family unit can have significant impacts on women. Esping-Andersen (1999) suggests

“Minimizing family dependencies implies a radically recast welfare state. Basically, via the de-familialization of welfare responsibilities, the social democratic welfare states helps commodify women (and so lessens the dependence on males) so that it can then de-commodify them” (p. 46).

Continuing a similar line of criticism, Nancy Fraser (2014) suggests that Polanyi’s identification of land, labor, and money as fictitious commodities is an apt theoretical basis for connecting and analyzing the “triple crisis” of capitalism- what she defines as being an interconnected crisis of environment, financialization, and social reproduction.

However, Fraser draws on Hegel to suggest that the incorporation and commodification of land, labor, and capital into the market mechanism relies on a hidden world of non-commodities. In other words, the commodification of labor superposes uncommodified household labor and social reproduction. Fraser (2014) states, “What he failed to note was that the construction of “labor power” as a fictitious commodity rested on the simultaneous co-construction of “care” as a non-commodity.” (p. 550). Fraser (2014) also seems critical of the implication that de-commodification puts forth as it relates to alternatives. Specifically, Fraser (2014) is critical of the implication that pre-capitalist forms of social ordering are preferable to that of the market mechanism. She says,

“Associating change exclusively with decay and decline, it overlooks the possibility, noted by Marx, that marketization can generate emancipatory effects, by dissolving modes of domination external to the market and creating the basis for new, more inclusive, and egalitarian solidarities” (p. 547).

With this criticism, then, Nancy Fraser (2014), suggests adding dimensions of domination and emancipation to the theoretical basis provided by Polanyi (1944). Meaning, of course, that any discussion of de-commodification needs, first, to recognize that which is not yet commodified and, second, to critically evaluate alternatives for their suggestion or implication of women's position in society.

Extending the analysis of UBI within the theoretical framework of de-commodification to include the role of unpaid household labor, the role of the family, and the issue of domination and emancipation, UBI, again, has some potential depending on the proposal. One of the basic requirements of a UBI, at least in those coming from the European Social Democrat, is that it must be paid on an individual basis (BIEN, n.d.). Clear even in the work of Thomas Spence (1796), this requires that the UBI be paid to women and others who may or may not have an attachment to paid employment or the wage system. Making it individual, then, serves some role in de-familization because those who are not directly attached to the labor market do not have to rely on those who are. That is, those unattached members of the family do not require the family as a redistribution mechanism. The libertarian proposals, however, do not have this same de-familization effect because the primary benefits are tied to the labor market and not necessarily individualized. In, for example, Friedman's (2002) proposal, a basic guarantee would be provided with no employment income but there is no requirement that this basic guarantee be made on the individual level. At the same time, it is assumed that families would be incentivized to up their benefits through labor market

participation. This “upping” effect as well as the lack of individual guarantee, of course, favors those attached to the market and requires the unattached to rely on family-based redistribution.

As it relates to the line of argumentation that women must first be commodified before being de-commodified, especially, regarding unpaid labor, UBI alone has mixed potential. Assuming that the UBI proposal is individualized, the benefit could provide women with the ability to seek out alternatives to their own unpaid labor within the market. That is, women could use the benefit to buy childcare and other household labor-related services. Women could then choose to seek paid employment or other activities with a lessened burden for unpaid labor. On the other end, a UBI could function like the wages for housework movement in that it could serve to commodify women who perform unpaid labor. That is, a UBI could serve as a form of payment for the unpaid labor performed. This, however, is but one step in the commodification and de-commodification process. It would not, in that instance, serve to de-commodify. All of this, of course, hinges on the payment being individualized which, as stated above, is not necessarily a requirement of the libertarian proposals.

Considering domination and emancipation, UBI could be emancipatory if it provides freedom of choice. This means, of course, that not only would a UBI need to be individualized but it also needs to be set at a level such that freedom from the labor market is provided and freedom to purchase household production services within the market is also a viable option. Though many of the social democratic proposals, as noted

prior, suggest freedom as the goal, individual benefits, and a level of benefit that would provide an alternative to the labor market- no proposal, at least of which have been considered, explicitly mentions or extends this purpose to freedom of choice in household production. At the same time and as already discussed, libertarian proposals only further solidify not only the market but the role of the family and, to that end, serve no emancipatory purpose but rather further entrench a secondary position. Finally, UBI alone may not serve to expel domination even with freedom of choice extended to household production. As noted in Van Parijs and Vanderbrought (2017), “The unequal extent to which men and women make use of the enhance possibility of reducing their working time could indirectly reduce the real freedom of women.” (p. 188). Van Parijs and Vanderbrought (2017), here, are making the argument that the freedom of choice provided to women from a UBI could result in increased discrimination in the workplace. Essentially, Van Parijs and Vanderbrought (2017) are suggesting that employers will assume that women will be more likely to leave the labor force for the purpose of childcare or other household needs if they are provided with a UBI and, thus, use this reasoning to further favor men. With this argument in mind, UBI in and of itself may not provide emancipation from societal roles and, depending on its structure, may serve to further solidify the domination of women. 44

4.3 Why are we even working? - Full-Employment, and Productivity

A concern discussed in much of the welfare literature is the equality-jobs tradeoff. Indeed, this topic has been brought up in both of Esping-Andersen's (1990 & 1999) books

as well as many others including Kenworthy (2003) and Iversen and Wren (1998). The idea is that, especially as developed countries enter a period of post-industrialization, begin to rely more heavily on the service sector, integrate women into the labor market, and advance technology, policy can only accomplish one of two things: full-employment or equality of wages. Some of the reasons given for this tradeoff and, moreover, the increasing importance of the tradeoff are the combined effects of an increased labor market pool, de-industrialization caused by technological advancements and globalization, and the slow or minimal growth of labor productivity in the service sector.

On the last point, in particular, Iversen & Wren (1998) state,

“The virtuous circle between falling prices and rising real demand, as experienced during the expansion of manufacturing employment, is therefore broken. Instead, the most important source of market-generated expansion of employment in services, apart from the effects of changing consumption patterns, becomes lower wages, which translate into cheaper prices and higher effective demand.” (p. 512).

Meaning, of course, that job creation and growth in an economy dominated by manufacturing does not rely, at least as heavily, on reducing wages to reduce prices and increase demand. Rather, manufacturing relies on productivity improvements which has the effect of reducing prices, increasing demand, and, ultimately, job creation through that increased demand. In the service sector, however, productivity increases are few and far between. Esping- Andersen (1999) uses the example of haircuts, among other things, to illustrate the productivity growth issues and, thus, wage problems of the service sector.

He states,

“Many services, like hairdressing, psychoanalysis, child-minding, teaching, or massage, are inherently incapable of raising productivity by much. You cannot teach or massage quicker without a quality loss. If hairdressers’ earnings were to follow relative productivity... the service would most likely vanish on the supply side. If, alternatively, their earnings follow pace with those in highly productive sector... the service would vanish on the demand side.” (p. 56)

With this, then, countries experiencing the previously listed changes in their economic makeup and labor market structure have followed different policy paths which exemplify the equality-jobs tradeoff. As described in Esping-Andersen (1999), for example, the United States has chosen increased labor market flexibility and deregulation with the intention to promote employment and job creation. With this, however, has come rising inequality, poverty, and the creation of an “outsider class”- a class of people whose skills are mismatched for higher-skilled service jobs, who cannot easily gain the skills for these jobs, and who are left in the very low-wage, low-skill sector without much possibility to improve their position. Despite these change in the labor market, however, Esping-Andersen (1999) suggests that this is not a “superior arrangement to minimize unemployment and maximize jobs.” (p. 141). He states, “In fact, it may not be regulation that makes the difference as much as merely being the United States of America.” (Esping-Andersen 1999 p. 141). This point is evidenced by the fact that other Anglo-Saxon countries like the UK and Canada have also pursued this policy mix with less desirable job creation.

Outside of the realm of Anglo-Saxon countries, Continental Europe, described as being motivated by the “conservative” ideology, has implemented more rigid labor

markets and regulations (Esping-Andersen 1999). Thus, they do not have as much issue with outsider classes or rising inequality, but they do seem to have issues in their labor market, as evidenced by high rates of self-employment and low employment growth rates. In addition, conservative regimes, seem to produce lower levels of female labor force participation (Esping-Andersen 1999). Perhaps an outlier in this trade-off, as they seem to avoid, at least, some of the equality-jobs trade-off, however, is the Nordic system. As described by Esping-Andersen (1999), “Nordic-cum-Dutch countries opted for a combination of high labour market flexibility with strong social guarantees... “(p. 122). Indeed, as can be seen from the below table in Esping-Andersen (1999), this regime type has much less issue with inequality and still boosts some employment growth.

TABLE 7.3. *The equality-jobs trade-off*

	Rigidity index ^a	Wage inequality ^b	Real wage growth ^c	Employment growth ^d
Liberal regimes ^e	3.4	0.53	-0.10	1.4
Continental Europe ^f	16.4	0.70	1.20	0.6
Scandinavia ^g	9.8	0.74	1.00	0.8

^a Average OECD ranking, taken from col. 5 in OECD (1994a, Part II, Table 6.7).

^b The ratio of lowest decile to fifth decile earnings, latest data (OECD, 1993, Table 5.2). (New Zealand and Finland are excluded from these calculations.)

^c Annual average real wage growth in manufacturing, 1979–89 (OECD, *Historical Statistics*, 1995, Table 9.2).

^d Annual average percentage growth of employment, 1979–89 (OECD, *Historical Statistics*, 1995, Table 1.6).

^e Australia, Canada, New Zealand, UK, and USA.

^f Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, and the Netherlands.

^g Denmark, Finland, Norway, and Sweden.

Figure 3: Comparative Equality- Jobs Outcomes from Esping-Andersen (1999)

With seeming outliers like the Scandinavian or Nordic, social-democratic systems, Esping-Andersen (1999) suggests that the tradeoff is far more complicated than

it first appears and suggests future research on unique national conditions that impact the equality-jobs balance. Though, Esping-Andersen (1999) does suggest that the social spending levels and the government as an employer has dramatically contributed to the conditions in these welfare regimes. On a similar point, then, Iversen & Wren (1998), suggest that the trade-off need not be thought of as a dilemma but a trilemma wherein, “nations confront a three-way choice, or “trilemma,” between budget restraint, income inequality, and employment growth. While it is possible to pursue two of these goals simultaneously, it has so far proved impossible to achieve all three.” (p. 508). They argue that social democratic welfare regimes provide large government expenditures but that these are financed through high taxation and debt. Meaning, of course, that Iversen & Wren (1998) are suggesting that while social democratic systems may have accomplished higher employment rates and simultaneously supported equity in wages but that has come at the cost of an expanded budget. The authors state,

“Because budgetary restraint precludes any rapid expansion of public sector employment, governments wedded to such discipline must either accept low earnings equality in order to spur growth in private sector employment or face low growth in overall employment.” (p. 513)

Seemingly implied in these discussions, is the idea that there are not enough jobs to go around and, indeed, with the rapid expansion of technology and automation, this discussion is further amplified in more public circles by the possibility of even fewer jobs in the near future. Importantly, however, this implication relies on upholding and/or there being no viable alternatives to the current organization of labor, employment, and

unemployment. Indeed, even in the Scandinavian countries which promote employment and wage equality, the suggestion is that the public sector must, in part, create jobs to make up for jobs not created in the private sector. As argued in Juliet Schor's (1998) book, *The Overworked American*, however, those who are employed, at least in the United States, are dedicating far more hours to work than is necessary. In fact, at the time of writing, Schor (1998) suggests that Americans were working more hours than ever before in human history, save for the early periods of the industrial revolution. Schor (1998) also does a calculation based on labor productivity growth up to the time of her writing and suggests that Americans could perform half the work they were doing and still maintain an, arguably, decent standard of living. Schor (1998) states,

“In other words, we could now produce our 1948 standard of living (measured in terms of marketed goods and services in less than half the time it took in that year. We actually could have chosen the four-hour day. Or a working year of six months.” (pg. 2).

With this, then, Schor (1998) suggests a solution of spreading out the work amongst the population, with the dual impact of increasing employment rates and increasing leisure time.

To the extent that UBI provides de-commodification rather than upholding or empowering the labor market, the concern for full employment may be lessened and the ability to restructure the labor market in the ways proposed by Schor (1998) may be increased. As discussed in the work of Bertrand Russel (1918), among others, a UBI that provides for basic necessities may and should lead to people reevaluating the classic

labor vs. leisure tradeoff – wherein people choose their labor time based on the utility of income provided but also incur a disutility from performing that labor and not spending their time in leisure. That is to say, a UBI that serves a de-commodification end, should decrease the utility provided from employment income and increase the utility gained from leisure. With this, then, a UBI could make it such that employment in general but, especially, employment that is particularly arduous, unsatisfying or dangerous would have to provide additional incentivization beyond what is currently required. As it relates to those particularly terrible jobs, of course, this could mean an inversion of the wage system. As mentioned in Russel (1918) and others, of course, this inversion is a positive effect because, as Russel (1918) suggests, these jobs should add incentivization and relying on the threat of starvation is cruel. While this additional incentivization is often implicitly or explicitly limited to additional monetary incentives, it is possible that this incentivization could take a monetary form as well as increased flexibility and leisure time. Thus, prompting a reconsideration of working time and the distribution of jobs, as in Schor (1998).

Meeting the de-commodification end, however, would require, as noted, a level of benefit that allows for increased choices. This, of course, would require additional financing as compared to benefits that are directly tied to the labor market or partial UBIs. Though UBI financing and, more generally, theories of money are beyond the scope of this paper, this fact may give some merit to the arguments made by Iversen and Wren (1998). Yet, even still- all discussion surrounding this tradeoff, including Iversen

and Wren (1998), lack consideration along the lines of Schor's (1998) argument for the role of the current structure of the labor market in producing the tradeoff. Moreover, an underlying assumption of these discussions is that employment should be a goal and, as implied in their term, "budgetary restraint" the government should not be spending more. While it may be true that the service sector naturally produces fewer jobs under the current labor structure and that there is the concern of even fewer jobs as automation continues, the trade-off discussion takes a limited view of reality which assumes what is given. Perhaps, then, UBI could assist in questioning through changing or prompting the change of the choices faced.

Chapter 5: UBI- A cure-all or Band-aid?

The guiding question and the primary purpose in this project has been in determining the extent to which a UBI, and its implementation in the United States, can or should be considered a cure-all for poverty and inequality. As discussed in the introductory chapter, the United States is currently facing a triple crisis of capitalism: inequality, instability, and the ecological crisis. Though, if taking the definition from Fraser (2014)- which I believe to be necessary, one must also add social reproduction to that list. Yet, and despite the promises of the welfare system, the government of the United States seems disinterested, if not, disloyal, to the welfare of its citizens and improving the current, worsening conditions of these citizens. Instead, the United States continues to uphold and reinforce its unbreakable romance with and loyalty to the paramount value of liberalism- markets know best. With this romance, as seen in Esping-Andersen (1990), welfare regimes in this liberal cluster have low levels of de-commodification and high levels of social stratification. Meaning, the U.S. and other liberal regimes do little to change inequalities, enforce or further solidify a dependency on markets, and create class dualism (Esping-Andersen 1990). In addition to this, the United States is plagued by corresponding narratives of individual responsibility and derogatory perceptions of welfare recipients, namely, women and minorities which contribute to shaping poor outcomes.

Each of these outcomes, of course, have been previously noted in the brief, historical development of the U.S. welfare system. Class dualism and individual responsibility, for example, can be seen within the differentiation made between the deserving and undeserving poor. A solidification and enforcement of markets is evident in the 1996 reforms which furthered work requirements. Finally, as noted by Moffit (2015), the current U.S. welfare system is not providing as high of benefits to those in the deepest poverty which is but one example of support for and lack of intervention in market inequalities as well as, potentially, the fruition of derogatory perceptions of women and minorities.

It is these conditions, as earlier suggested, that have sparked the most recent wave of renewed interest in a Universal Basic Income policy. In line with the historical development of UBI, of course, nearly every period of renewed interest has been predicated on and informed by sociopolitical and economic events- often negative in nature (Sloman, 2017). In the first period, for example, authors wrote about UBI as a reaction to revolutions which, at least in part, were informed by the enclosure movement. With this, proposals of this period focused heavily on the role of private property and aimed at reducing inequality created out of its distribution. In the second period, authors were writing after the First World War and the chaos in the Soviet Union. Toiling with notions of freedom, proposals of this period primarily centered on establishing a level of freedom for all- be it in opportunity, wealth, or leisure. In the third, proposals were

motivated out of ideology and the Johnson Administration's welfare expansion efforts. As a result, proposals centered on re-establishing the dominance of the market mechanism through tying benefits to labor and reducing the power of the state. Finally, of course, the most recent period sees a diverse literature aimed at resolving issues of inequality, instability, ecological damage, and social reproduction.

No matter the period in which it was proposed or the events that informed that proposal, however, one thread has remained throughout a significant portion of its history as well as in more recent pilot efforts- labor. Indeed, as argued in earlier chapters, labor and UBI's effect on labor may be both the defining differentiator between Libertarian and Social Democratic proposals, is the primary outcome variable of interest in almost all pilots and could be the most pressing ethical question that remains an obstacle to its implementation. At the same time, UBI's labor impacts can be seen as paramount to the issues that have informed the most recent wave: inequality, instability, the ecological crisis, and social reproduction.

As far as proposals are concerned, Spence (1796) suggested labor would be disincentivized but that luxuries not being provided would counteract this effect. Russell (1918) suggested that enforcing labor through the "threat of starvation" was cruel and that an inversion of the wage system to further incentivize low-wage labor was a positive effect. This is, notably, in addition to his arguments on the positives societal benefits to come out of increased leisure time. The Milners (1918), despite being more conservative than the previous two, echoed arguments that inversion is positive, enforcement through

threat is immoral, and luxuries will still serve as incentive. Finally, Friedman (2002), of course, bases his entire proposal around re-incentivizing, if not, requiring work.

Like the proposals, pilot programs have also explored a range of justifications and purposes, from resolving historical inequities in Compton, to offering support and improvement to the homeless in Denver, to sharing in a common asset as in Alaska and the Eastern Band of Cherokees, to improving the current welfare states like in Finland and the NIT programs. No matter the intent, however, the thread of labor remains in these as well. Indeed, despite producing a range of outcomes including positive effects on education, reducing crime, and improving health, among others, labor has been the defining outcome by which pilot programs have been judged. Two of the most famous programs- the NIT experiments and the Finnish experiment, for example, have been, at least by many, declared outright failures for their labor market impacts or lack thereof.

Despite all this attention and priority given to labor, however, the question is not whether labor disincentivization will occur. As shown by the quantity of proposers who believe disincentivization to be an impact as well as made at least somewhat clear through experimental results- though the flawed methodology of experiments is not lost upon me- it is quite probable that a UBI would introduce a disincentive to labor. The question, then, is whether this is moral and/or justifiable.

To answer this question, chapter four focused on theory and discussed the role of various proposals and pilots in meeting the criteria set by this theory. With a theoretical basis of de-commodification and social stratification, an inclusion of social reproduction

and women, and a discussion on the equality-jobs tradeoff that was supplemented by concerns over working time, a few conclusions can be drawn. Primarily, proposals coming from libertarians do little toward producing positive outcomes along these theoretical bases. Benefit levels must be such that freedom of choice is granted both within the household and the labor market. Individual receipt is important for equality. And finally, given the literature on the equality-jobs trade-off and the arguments made by Schor (1998), there is potentially not only a need for but an opportunity to rethink the current structure of labor and the goals of UBI as it relates to labor.

On this last point, in particular, though Universal Basic Income can be characterized as both a serious proposal for reform as well as an invitation to question the status quo, the literature and pilots have done, comparatively, little toward advancing this conversation on disincentivization. That is, while UBI proposals have begged questions on the morality and application of private property (Spence 1796; Paine 1795), questioned the rights granted to man (Charlier 1848), argued the validity of leisure, investigated alternative systems (Russell 1918), and criticized the current trajectory of the welfare system (Friedman, 2002), among others- the conversation regarding labor has been guided by the same outcome measure and underlying conception of what is and what can be. That is, the discussion centers on disincentivization as if it is something to be avoided either partially or completely and, in every time, and place. Though Social Democrats do not employ work requirements, even the most progressive proposals stemming from this group, like Bertrand Russell (1918) who argued that an incentive to

employment through threat of starvation was cruel, do not beg questions regarding whether incentivization/disincentivization is a worthwhile goal. Russell, for example, also makes an argument that labor would still be incentivized through the lack of provisioning of luxury goods. What Russell is criticizing, then, is not the premise of incentivization/disincentivization itself or its employment as a goal but, rather, one part of the whole- *how* labor is incentivized not whether we *should* incentivize it.

With this in mind and, perhaps, even more important than the conclusions on UBI structure drawn from the fourth chapter, I suggest that the impact and cure-all quality of a UBI hinges on its context and framing. Specifically, the success of a UBI hinges on the institutional and historical context in which it is proposed. Put simply, time and place matter. In addition, UBI's success, especially in the context of the United States, is contingent on a reconceptualization of social policy in general and our goals with UBI in particular.

As it relates to historical and institutional context, a perfect example of time and place playing a significant role can be seen in comparing the Finnish experiment to a policy adoption in the United States. For one, the status quo for which UBI offered an alternative in Finland is significantly different than the United States and, thus, a UBI should have different goals, qualities, and impacts. The current Finnish system also already provides incredibly generous benefits that serve to de-commodify and upset the social stratification of markets. At the same time, Finland boasts significantly better outcomes than the United States on a range of measures including on health, happiness,

and poverty. This, again, points to the need for different UBI policies and a which hinge on entirely different questions. Even within the United States, institutional and historical context matters. For example, UBI is not going to cure homelessness in Denver because, among other things, there is a simple lack of supply in affordable housing and a lack of intuitional support or historical legacy for increasing that supply. Finally, and as already extensively noted, UBI has served different ends and held different qualities depending on the time in which it is proposed, providing further evidence to suggest that historical and institutional context matters. In a more modern context this is exemplified in the Compton pilot. Unlike pilots that predominately serve white populations, the Compton pilot is motivated and shaped by the historical legacies of racism within the city. As seen in the attention to participation requirements, for example, this legacy has prompted the Compton pilot to prioritize access and inclusivity.

Finally, UBI and the problems which have revamped interest in it in the modern period implore us to reconsider and reconceptualize social policy in general and the goals of UBI in particular- especially, in the context of the United States. As previously mentioned, the U.S. welfare regime has and continues to prioritize individual responsibility and reinforce the market mechanism. This, however, is not producing positive outcomes. Providing only the bare minimum, the U.S. conceptualizes social policy as a last resort, a social safety net that implores individuals to change their situation for themselves because poverty is ultimately an individual problem. Lacking consideration for structural issues, among many other things, the U.S. does not focus on

improving social well-being, enhancing de-commodification, and upsetting social stratification but, it very well could and should. Beyond the U.S., a UBI and the problems we face implore us to reconceptualize social policy along other dimensions, reframing the problems we face and re-evaluating our goals. For example, with the eminent threat of climate change perhaps we should be focusing on distribution rather than growth. Again, referring to our poverty problem, perhaps, we should return to the goal of poverty elimination over alleviation.

As it relates to UBI in particular, the goal of incentivization and/or the avoidance of disincentivization requires reconceptualization, again, especially in the context of the United States. Ultimately, this goal is founded in ideas about markets as primary and poverty as individual, as outlined above, and, more generally, in assumptions about the structure of labor, the goal of growth, and the possibilities we face as noted in the discussion on the equality-jobs trade-off. Frankly, we do not have to take what is as a given. Though there has been a long history of disincentivization in proposals and pilots, the work of Juliet Schor (1998) and the arguments made by Polanyi (1944) and Esping-Andersen (1990) implore us to consider UBI for its de-commodification power rather than its ability or inability to mitigate disincentivization. Extending this to pilots, rather than declaring them failures for results of reduced labor time, the conversation should be on what is being done with that reduced labor time. Author Forget (2011), for example, provides evidence to suggest that the NIT experiments in Duaphin, Manitoba improved not only the health of the recipients but had a “social multiplier” effect that led to positive

improvements for the entire community. In doing this work, Forget (2011) notes that NIT experiment results were overshadowed by labor disincentivization and, erroneous, suggestions of increased divorce. Yet, Forget's (2011) work reminds us of the positive individual and societal benefits that are being forgotten. If we are to reframe our conceptualization of social policy to one that prioritizes social well-being and reimagine our goal with UBI as one of de-commodification, then, there is plenty of evidence to support the fact that reducing labor through UBI allows the pursuit of education, leisure, social reproduction. Beyond that, as noted in part by Forget (2011), among others there is also evidence to support that providing a UBI improves health, wellbeing, crime, etc not only for individuals but for communities.

In conclusion, there are two main suggestions of this thesis especially in the wake of the triple crises of capitalism, with the addition of social reproduction. First, I suggest that a UBI in its current form may not be a cure-all and it certainly cannot be in a one-size-fits-all form, but it does not have to be a band-aid. For the United States, this is particularly true. Second, and perhaps more importantly, we need to reconceptualize social policy, reimagine our goals and, moreover, question the structures and assumptions underpinning those goals. To do so, perhaps, we should start by adopting a new vocabulary and changing our grammar when thinking about social policy in general and UBI in particular. For example, we should be giving priority to "social reproduction" over "production", "distribution" over "growth", "de-commodification" over "disincentivization" and "human well-being and development" over all else.

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