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BASIC INCOME & a New Universalism



Cover 38/2, Design: Debra Livingston – University of the Sunshine Coast.

The idea of distributing wealth evenly is seen as a utopian dream by many who believe humans tend to be greedy by nature, due to their excessive desire for materialism and resources and an unwillingness to share the wealth. When designing a cover image for this issue which analyses debates about 'Basic Income and a New Universalism' in an age of escalating inequality it was not easy to create a concept that did not include graphs or to focus on an idea about inequality, rather than grasp the concept of 'an inspired vision of universalism' for global equality (Mays and Tomlinson 2019). It is important to design a cover that communicates the assurance that everyone should have access to a minimum income that guarantees enough to live on decently; a cover that is conceptual rather than clichéd or typically focuses on images of finance or money.

It was also difficult not to design a concept that would transmit a 'hand out' interpretation, it was important to keep the focus on *sharing* in a world that continues with austerity measures and neo-liberalistic conservative governments. One where 'a free market society that is antithetical to the welfare state and democratic ideas concerning egalitarian forms of distribution' are widening the poverty gap. Where the disruption of employability due to automation and artificial Intelligence is bringing about the increase in casualisation of work (Mays and Tomlinson 2019). The failure of governments to acknowledge the need for people to survive in times of need where depleted weekend penalty rates and unwillingness to increase social welfare are among the austerity measures instituted. At the same time politicians are giving themselves annual pay rises. This brought about the idea of using water, as the concept for this issue's cover design. Water is a life-giving force, without it we would perish, similarly we would perish without access to a basic income. To represent the articles that discuss changes directed at seeking greater equity in the distribution of income in order to establish a just society', the glasses are being filled to present an egalitarian vision for a good society' (Mays and Tomlinson 2019).

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EDITORIAL CONTACTS

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Lee-anne Bye
Operations Manager
Social Alternatives
Faculty of Arts, Business and Law
Maroochydore DC Qld 4558
lee-anne@socialalternatives.com

GENERAL ENQUIRIES

Julie Matthews
University of Adelaide
julie@socialalternatives.com

CO-ORDINATING EDITOR

Bronwyn Stevens
bestevens@biblio61.com

SHORT STORY EDITOR

Clare Archer-Lean
University of the Sunshine Coast
carcher@usc.edu.au

BOOK REVIEWS EDITOR

Loretto Bowshall
lbowshall@bigpond.com

POETRY EDITOR

Ella Jeffery
e.jeffery@socialalternatives.com

COVER DESIGN, DESKTOP PUBLISHING AND ART DIRECTION

Debra Livingston
University of the Sunshine Coast
debra@socialalternatives.com

WEBSITE

Julie Matthews and
Debra Livingston
julie@socialalternatives.com

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Basic Income and a New Universalism

JENNI MAYS AND JOHN TOMLINSON †

In an age characterised by burgeoning inequality, automation, and globalisation (White 2013), safeguarding the social (welfare) state and the associated rights of all people in society becomes a crucial task for considering a new universalism, in the form of universal Basic Income (BI). Decades of neoliberalism and austerity have significantly eroded the welfare state in providing a social safety net. The global and Australian shift away from universalism has created policies focused on increased targeting and greater conditionality through stringent controls in access to social protection and services. Yet academics, activists and political leaders are calling for the introduction of an alternative in the form of a universal BI. The growing interest in BI across all sides of the political spectrum has opened the space for more critical discussions. BI has the potential for forging a newly inspired vision of universalism to inform future design, implementation and evaluation of the strategy. The articles in this themed edition all contribute to inspiring a new collective vision for new universalism founded on BI and transitioning to a more democratic society. This introductory article provides an overview of universal BI, its challenges and the potentiality for a new universalism in welfare provision.

Introduction

The global dominance of austerity measures and neoliberal policies in Western developed countries has given rise to a free-market society that is antithetical to the welfare state and democratic ideas concerning egalitarian forms of distribution. Widening poverty gaps and unprecedented levels of income and wealth inequality (Piketty 2014), together with disruptive structural changes (automation in the gig economy and structural adjustment of labour markets resulting in greater casualisation of work) have produced greater levels of economic, social and political insecurity (Bruun and Duka 2018; Standing 2014). In response to these pressing challenges, there has been an increase in political debate on the potential for universal Basic Income (BI) to redress poverty, structural inequality and inequity in distribution. The current climate represents a pivotal point in time for progressing the design and implementation of a universal alternative to neoliberalism in the form of a BI and contributing to a new universalism for the social (welfare) state and broader society. This special issue responds to these timely debates on the potential for BI to present a new universalism. This article provides an initial scoping of BI as a backdrop to the articles that follow.

Potentialities of BI as an Alternative Universal Strategy

BI is distinct from modern policies dominated by neoliberal economic principles and austerity found

across developed Western countries (for example Australia and the United States of America). It has far reaching implications for social change beyond social protection (pensions and benefits). BI, grounded in the philosophy of social justice, equity and rights, provides a space for alternative thinking and transformative change concerning social protection (pensions and benefits), and social service provision, which in turn becomes a step toward constructing an egalitarian society (Gramsci 1977). The potentialities of BI as an alternative strategy reach beyond the scope of the very narrow neoliberal focus on social protection that views welfare recipients as deserving or undeserving. BI is designed to create a renewed political vision for a just society through a new commitment to looking beyond traditional treatment of individuals and narrow conceptions of work and economic participation in society. BI, established on distributive and social justice goals, and on preventing poverty and stigmatisation, becomes a mechanism for initiating broader change toward constructing an egalitarian society (Gramsci 1977). This type of transformative change is different from traditional social protection, which targets narrow reformist change and leaves inequitable structural arrangements and the unequal capitalist system intact.

BI as a universal provision and redistributive measure provides the space for reframing policy by embracing equality of opportunity for shared politics, collective vision and solidarity based upon its philosophical

principles of equity, social citizenship, equality and social cohesion. BI as a unifying force is an inclusive strategy for greater economic, social and political security for all people through shared collective decision-making and social citizenship (Torry 2016). As a universal policy, BI functions to initiate the reorganisation and restructuring of the welfare state into a social state that enables a more progressive and democratic society, one that is based upon egalitarian values for public or community provision of social protection and social services (Piketty 2014: 307–308, 481; Raventós 2007: 65, 190). Yet the potentiality of BI as a radical, transformative policy has its critics (see Harvey 2006: 4). Birnbaum (2012) pointed out that for some critics, the objection is related to the ‘idleness’ concern whereby freedom is supposedly afforded without corresponding responsibility. From the critics’ viewpoint, society would lack solidarity and social interdependence because of BI’s assumed failure to implement conditions that compel people to contribute to society through work. This critique is common and has been extensively explored and refuted in the BI literature and beyond (see Birnbaum 2012; Standing 2014; Torry 2016; Van Parijs 1991 for their responses to critics).

BI does not replace but reconstitutes and strengthens the social (welfare) state and the social contract between government and its citizens as it transforms broader society (Birnbaum 2012: 180). It achieves this through social justice as the central organising principle for welfare provision, not individual attachment to the labour market. In providing a progressive vision, BI’s moral commitment to human rights and an adequate standard of living establishes the type of society we might want – a society with strong social requirements in the social protection system. BI would enhance individual, social and political freedom and economic security, and would advance notions of social citizenship to uphold dignity and autonomy.

The fundamental tenet underpinning this strategy is greater equity in the distribution of income in order to establish a just society. Changes directed at the institutional (social protection) and societal levels reframe policy for a democratic and egalitarian vision of a good society. This inclusive framing of BI is not new. For example, the Unemployed Workers Movement (1979) proposed a three-tiered implementation of universal income support to ensure people at the grassroots also had control over resources and increased participative decision-making. They viewed capitalism as the main driver of inequality and poverty. Therefore, for the Unemployed Workers Movement, BI reflected an egalitarian, socially just and fair way to respond to these structural inequalities and injustices manifested by the capitalist system. They saw BI as a means to achieve social, cultural and economic freedom (Unemployed Workers Movement 1979: 3). In establishing BI as a

social stake, power and structural imbalances would be corrected and democratic power would accrue to citizens to support them in striving for the common good through ideals of social citizenship, not productive citizenship conceptions (Birnbaum 2012: 180; Standing 2014: 18–19; Torry 2016: 88–89).

Universalism and the BI Connection

A universal welfare state is central to ensuring all citizens are equal relative to social state provision of resources, programs or services. In this article, the social state is the preferred term based on reconfiguring and strengthening an egalitarian approach to the welfare state (Piketty 2014: 31, 307–308, 481; Raventós 2007: 65, 190). The erosion of the welfare state over time, dominance of neoliberalism and increased precarity points to the need for reconstituting a new universalism that is transformative and upholds egalitarian redistribution (Mays 2016; Torry 2016). Constructing a new universalism provides one way of creating a renewed collective vision for a just society, together with working toward inclusive social protection measures (including an income guarantee, but also public goods such as health care, social housing and education) that are grounded in ethical and just requirements. Unlike targeted welfare provision (such as our current social protection system), BI does not reify traditional categories, nor stigmatise on the basis of need or categories of need. BI is a powerful policy for achieving universalism through distributive justice. Distributive justice is about redistribution of resources and goods that is egalitarian and responds to inequality, income and wealth insecurity, poverty and precarity (Birnbaum 2012).

Under BI, the social state can be designed to protect the democratic and welfare rights of all people in society. Universal approaches are critical for ensuring people have access to much needed resources or services during hardship. As Birnbaum (2012: 3) explains:

Each member of society is entitled to resources in times of need. Access to essential services or income support is a universal right and, hence, it does not depend on the (unpredictable) charity of the rich, and it does not involve stigmatizing forms of provision.

Universalism in welfare is also crucial for preventing stigma associated with receiving welfare. The sense of right of access is retained under BI grant through the ‘right of citizenship’ status (Tomlinson 1991: 56). A full universal BI provision creates an inclusive and cohesive social and common good that benefits all citizens rather than dominant group interests. The principle of the right to freedom and personal development is positioned alongside the right of citizens to the common good.

Universalism calls for collective benefit in the redistribution of wealth and the upholding of rights and justice. Early writings on universal provisions such as BI (seen as a social dividend) and the need for an egalitarian society can be found in Thomas Paine's *Agrarian Justice* first published in 1797 (Paine 1987). Paine proposed a universal entitlement of citizens to prevent poverty. He also argued that the universal stakeholder grant should not be tied to charity, workhouse conditions, or other controls, as these contribute to stigmatising recipients. Paine's work has been instrumental in shaping modern conceptions of distributive justice, liberty and universal stakeholder grants (for example BI).

In recent BI debates, questions have emerged concerning the conception of 'universal' being truly free from conditions. In other words there is growing recognition of the notion that all people receiving the provision ignores the reality that specific criteria are used to define citizenship and residence (Standing cited in Brand 2019). This in turn potentially excludes some people (such as non-resident citizens and short-term migrants). While acknowledging the criticisms associated with the term 'universal', there is a need to maintain the conceptualisation of universal policy to mitigate against targeted means of social protection and welfare state services and programs.

BI as a universal policy counters neoliberalism and the excessive targeting of welfare recipients. It is through the normative dimension that the universal social (welfare) state can connect citizenship to (re) distributive mechanisms of equity as opposed to having to prove need, productive participation or reciprocal arrangements (welfare-to-work arrangements). The normative foundations of equity offer a powerful justification for creating a new universalism in the form of BI and strengthening the social state in providing equal opportunity to services and programs. Therefore, BI challenges the neoliberal tendencies of conditional welfare provision through the normative justification of equity, and can bring about a broader equalisation of opportunities through redistribution. The articles in this edition similarly respond to the need for incorporating different dimensions (social justice, ecological sustainability, economics and disability activities movements) to advance important discussions of BI.

Defining BI

A BI is an unconditional regular payment to all citizens over a specified age. Children living at home or in care (foster care) would be paid a proportion of the adult rate, but adult children living away from home would be paid the adult rate (Birnbaum 2012; Torry 2016). The amount paid would be set at a modest rate capable of upholding the dignity

of all people. BI has no conditions attached to it apart from established permanent residence. As discussed above, a BI paid to a whole society would provide a way forward for cooperative approaches and solidarity, which in turn strengthens the overall cohesiveness of society (De Wispelaere 2016; De Wispelaere and Stirton 2004). The principles of social justice and social citizenship underpinning BI thereby support an inclusive society for all, especially if progressive taxation were to be introduced at the same time to create a pathway for a sustainable, egalitarian and ecological society (Mays et al. 2016). The BI goes some way towards transforming the social state by creating foundations for universal provision and a society built on social inclusion and the common good (Widerquist 2013: 105).

The arguments in this article, grounded in normative philosophy of egalitarianism and social justice ideas, are in effect an effort to respond to the question of 'Why does the vision of a Basic Income evoke such strong counter reactions?' In part, the answer lies in the power of prevailing neoliberal ideas that reinforce negative perceptions.

I believe the reason the current Australian system of income support exists, rather than a system embodying an unconditional universal Basic Income, has little to do with economic viability. The current income support system prevails because it is supported by values and ideologies which are held and enforced by the powerful (Tomlinson 2001: Preface).

In order that a BI might be seen as an idea whose time has come it is necessary to examine the neoliberal propositions which feed such negativity towards BI.

Would a BI be an Affordable and Useful Policy for Australia?

The idea of universal BI is gaining traction. Federal Greens' leader, Richard Di Natale, in a 2018 speech to the National Press Club called on Australia to introduce a BI, prompting critics to weigh into the debate (Livingston 2018). The Greens proposed an estimated figure between A\$20,000 and A\$40,000 per year as a relevant BI payment to ensure adequacy (Creighton 2018). Opponents of BI focused on publicly denouncing the feasibility of BI as an alternative to conditional, targeted and means-tested welfare. Much of the commentary focused on the costs associated with BI and the proposed generous scheme (Creighton 2018). (For more feasibility arguments and criticisms see Birnbaum 2012.)

Few critics addressed the issue of BI's capacity to respond to poverty and inequality, but set their sights

on discounting the payment on ideologically influenced pseudo-economic grounds (Widerquist 2013). BI critics (such as Harvey 2006) claim there are better ways to respond to unemployment and poverty. They propose Negative Income Tax (NIT), Job Guarantees or increasing the level of pensions and benefits (Harvey 2006). However, such alternatives do little to address the broader structural inequalities entrenched in our social protection system of income support, nor broader inequalities in the social (welfare) state. NIT is distinct from BI in that NIT is tied to work income and replaces the bureaucratic controls of the welfare state. While appealing in some respects, NIT is founded on the ideas of recipients paying no tax on their first dollar of market income, but the NIT is gradually withdrawn, until recipients reach a pre-established 'break even point'. When the NIT reaches zero and additional income is made, taxes are introduced (Widerquist et al. 2013). The NIT strategy relies on the amount of earned income to determine the benefit, and therefore is directly tied to the market economy. Therefore, the foundational principles of BI, incorporating egalitarianism and equity, are not deemed to be necessary for the NIT provision, thereby suggesting progress to a more democratic and egalitarian approach and society would not form part of reforming the welfare state for NIT (Widerquist et al. 2013). (Contrary to this is that some advocates of NIT such as Harvey 2006, do see it as a stepping stone to a truly universal BI.) A BI contrastingly provides direct payments of the same nominal amount to all regardless of income level or earnings from other sources; that is there is no withdrawal of the payment (Van Parijs 1991, 2005: 57). As earlier discussions indicated, BI is predicated on normative justifications that help support the reconfiguring of the social (welfare) state and transformation to a just society.

NIT and Guaranteed Minimum Income (GMI) were considered in Australia by the Poverty Inquiry in the 1970s (Commission of Inquiry into Poverty in Australia 1975). But both NIT and GMI have not been given serious consideration by governments since the dismissal of the Whitlam Government. Job Guarantees (see Mitchell and Watts 2004; Tomlinson 1991) have been advanced as the way forward by the Centre of Full Employment and Equity at the University of Newcastle. Not since Keating's Reciprocal Obligation policy in the mid-1990s, with their promise to find a job for all people who were *continually unemployed* for 18 months (Smyth 2014: 113), has any government given serious consideration to implementing a Job Guarantee policy. Such policies are very expensive and require a substantial number of bureaucrats to supervise those wanting work and those who found employment under such schemes (Mays et al. 2016). An entire issue of *Rutgers Journal of Law and Urban Policy* in 2005 was devoted to analysing the arguments regarding

Job Guarantees versus Basic Income, and included Australian contributions on both sides of the debate.

Pensions are already indexed in line with the Consumer Price Index (Whiteford 2019: 109-111). Governments if they wish can increase benefits at any time; it is just that they seldom are inclined to do so. No government has increased the base rate of Newstart (a form of unemployment benefit) since 1994 (Whiteford 2019). The Australian Council for Social Services frequently calls on the government to raise the Newstart rate of payment to a livable level (Australian Council of Social Service and University of New South Wales 2018). In May 2018, Chris Richardson from Deloitte Access Economics produced a report arguing that it would be an economically sensible and fiscally responsible policy to raise the weekly rate of the unemployment benefit by \$50 (Australian Broadcasting Corporation 2018). Cross Bench Senator Tim Storer, using the rationale from a Deloitte Access Economics Report, endorsed the Australian Council of Social Service's call to raise the level of Newstart by A\$75 a week (Australian Unemployed Workers Union 2019). These calls were to no avail.

Affordability

Critics would have us believe that BI is far too expensive to implement. This default stereotype has been an enduring feature in parliamentary debates and policy commentary (Mays 2016; Tomlinson 2001, 2016). The feasibility criticism is also founded on fiscal modelling which indicated that a large budgetary allocation collected via taxation would be needed to sustain BI (Scutella 2004; Whiteford 2019). Much of the BI literature, including the articles in this edition, point to the need for redistributing the tax burden, in terms of exploring the potential for changes to GST (Goods and Services Tax in Australia), such as a wealth tax or a social dividend on natural resources (similar to The Alaska Permanent Fund) (Widerquist 2013). Different modelling on financing BI through the existing taxation system found there is little evidence to support the claims of the need for a 75% tax increase on low to middle income earners and families to pay for a BI (for example see Ingles et al. 2019, who suggest one option of a tax rate of 33% or Scutella 2004: 23). By implementing tax increases and introducing a corresponding wealth tax the BI can feasibly be sustainable over time.

Social security and welfare services are the largest expenditures in the government budget. And the amount is set to increase from A\$164 billion (2017-18) to A\$191.2 billion by 2020 (Whiteford 2019). It is no surprise that decision-makers and BI critics retreat from debates when large BI costs are predicted. Frequently, such projected costs are because their proponents fail to take account of the increased tax which would be paid

by those receiving above average weekly wage incomes (through progressive taxation), following the introduction of a BI (Birnbau 2012). A BI is affordable if the social security, social services and taxation revenue systems are reconfigured to support a fair system (Ingles et al. 2019). Additionally, BI is feasible when the taxation system is restructured. Worsening inequalities and spending cuts born out of trickle-down economics and free-market policies has placed downward pressure on low to middle income earners (see also Piketty 2014).

BI is a catalyst for structural change and provides a buffer against the extremes of capitalism and the free market. It does this by creating an equitable distribution of income through the provision of a smoother income distribution curve, which in turn increases equity (Tomlinson 2016). Introducing a BI requires change across the income support and taxation systems to consolidate many existing transfer schemes (Torry 2016). BI represents a progressive investment toward an Australia that is free from poverty. The central argument should not be about the cost or affordability of the universal provision but whether the protagonists are in favour of a fairer redistribution or not.

Is BI a Socialist, Post-Material Middle Class Movement That Will Never Eventuate?

Writers who have argued for guaranteed income protection for all citizens have come from the far right: such as Friedrich Hayek (1940s-50s) and Milton Friedman (1960s-70s), through British Liberals such as Lady Rhys Williams (1940s-50s) to British social democratic Quakers such as Dennis Milner and Bertram Pickard (1919-20s) to left leaning libertarians such as Phillippe Van Parijs (1980s-the present) and left economists like Guy Standing (1980s-the present) (Birnbau 2012; Widerquist et al. 2013; Zwolinski 2019). In addition, it is worth noting that several supporters of universal income guarantees have won the Noble Prize for Economics, such as Bertrand Russell and James Mead (Mihm 2019).

Desiring the introduction of BI does not mean that people are solely committed to left-wing goals. What it does mean is that people are committed to the goal of the common good, fair taxation and distribution/redistribution of resources aimed at ending destitution and providing an income floor which encourages employment (Birnbau 2013; Mays 2016). Those who succeeded in introducing universal Medibank and then Medicare during the 1970s and 1980s confronted equivalent ideological obstacles to those urging the introduction of a BI above the poverty line (Lewis 2014). Medibank/Medicare is a form of social insurance and early intervention to support citizens during instances of ill health (Lewis 2014). Universal in its original intent, it was once seen as socialist scheme by many

Australian doctors. Critics of BI tend to ignore the value of universal schemes and fail to recognise the extent to which non-affluent people benefit from a BI, because it is a right which does not impose conditions and because it is not a charity (Tomlinson 2001). Its central benefits are that it does not distinguish between the deserving and non-deserving and it treats all citizens equally (Mays et al. 2016; also see Morley et al. this edition). It is a citizenship right which guarantees every permanent resident freedom from the fear of destitution.

Where To Next? Overview of the Special Issue

As critical scholars and activists, both authors are especially interested in progressing to a new universalism through BI and transformation of the social state (strengthening public programs of education, health, housing, and social protection, to name a few). BI has the potential to transform an income support system as one way to advance egalitarianism in society, the labour market, and other parts of democratic life. A BI offers more than a guaranteed payment. As a form of social dividend, the universal strategy provides security and dignity – something that has been lacking in our policies as a result of the widening gulf between the rich and poor. Many Australian workers (and workers in Western developed countries) are experiencing tough conditions financially, socially and emotionally. The current social security system of targeted and means-tested benefits is unsatisfactory and has been for some time. A BI provides a renewed vision against the failures of neoliberal policies with their hollow promises of strong economic growth and wealth trickle-down effects. Approximately three million people in Australia are living in poverty and this figure is growing (Australian Council of Social Services and University of New South Wales 2018). Many people are confronting casualised, part-time and precarious employment. The threat of unemployment and work for the dole hangs over the head of the majority of workers. Thus, transitioning to a BI requires political commitment to good economic management and structural changes to the taxation system.

The articles in this special issue are responding to the current climate of neoliberalism and the contrasting proposal for a new universal BI. According to Windquist et al. (2013), the ultimate goal of basic income is to eliminate (and even ameliorate) poverty, but in implementing a BI other redistributive changes occur which are explored further in the articles. A BI is a solid investment for the future for all Australians, not just the wealthy few. Unlike the existing means-tested welfare system with its benefit withdrawal and poverty traps, a BI has an inbuilt financial incentive to increase the disposable income of all through whatever work is available. The pressing question is about redistribution and establishing BI as a right, not as charity.

It involves ensuring there is a more equitable share of the pie for everyone, while simultaneously building in safeguards to make sure all meet their fair share of the tax burden. It is time to abolish inadequate social protection (pensions and benefits) by ending our attachment to 18th century Poor House policies.

Morley, Ablett and Mays highlight the need for responding to inequality and poverty through BI, together with reframing the policy ideology of deserving poor and implementing progressive taxation to support the social state in this endeavour. They describe the oppressiveness of entrenched notions of welfare dependency and the deserving poor – notions that are translated from policy to direct social work practice as part of creating justifications for uneven distribution. Morley et al. offer a compelling argument concerning growing inequality, advancement of technology and automation, and loss of critical taxation revenue that point to the need and feasibility of introducing BI while making structural changes to the tax system.

Duffy and Elder-Woodward's article reflects the growing interest in a new universalism in Scotland through trialing BI. Discussing the need for greater inclusion of the disability dimension, in BI discussions and planning they suggest a BI can only be realised by incorporating the core principles and objectives of the disabled peoples' Independent Living Movement (United Kingdom) (the term disabled people is the politically accepted common term used in the UK).

Rankin (New Zealand) presents much-needed analysis into the political economy and economics of securing a BI. In exploring the universal provision he explores the potential of BI as a universal property right, based on liberal democratic principles. Rankin shows through a political economy lens that New Zealand can pay its economic citizens a public equity dividend from the proceeds of public equity. For Rankin, this approach is central to reconstructing democracy by extending democratic rights, and the future opportunities that come with enhanced democracy.

Mulvale's article integrates ecological arguments as part of designing and implementing a BI. Mulvale uses a systematic review to show that issues of sustainability and the environment have received less attention than other arguments such as poverty eradication, precarity in unemployment and advancing social and political equality. The article explores the ecological (or Green) case for BI and concludes that ecological justifications together with BI are crucial for creating truly sustainable economies and just societies.

Finally, Torry explores several aspects of recent BI debates in the United Kingdom to consider the issue

of financial feasibility. Torry shows through describing a variety of feasibility tests the different routes that BI might take from concept to implementation. Torry also explains what the different routes will be accompanied by and what they might look like in the United Kingdom. The insights from Torry's article have relevance for Australia, in helping to inform critical design phases of BI and thinking through which way Australia wants to progress.

In building on the growing interest in basic income, each of the contributors critically discusses what it takes to transform society and introduce and justify a universal BI. The articles together contribute to inspiring a new collective vision of building a foundation for BI and other aspects of progressive social change. As a collection, these articles play a critical role in advancing BI from discussion to actual transformation of the current welfare and taxation revenue system, and mapping an achievable, sustainable, egalitarian alternative to the injustices in our current capitalist society. The articles in this special edition respond to the call for a *new universalism* that can help create a national and global democratic society that is socially just, decent and fair.

It seems appropriate to finish with Tomlinson (1995: 5) to whom this special edition is dedicated to. John drew on the words of activist Joe Hill to remind us '*don't mourn, organize*', as '*that is the message which we can't afford to forget*' in the pursuit of social change, especially during this time of burgeoning inequality, increased poverty and growing precarity (Tomlinson 1995: 5).

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Authors

Jenni Mays is Senior Lecturer in social policy at the Queensland University of Technology. She is the lead author of *Basic Income in Australia and New Zealand: Perspectives from the Neoliberal Frontier*, with Greg Marston and John Tomlinson; and 'Disability, citizenship, and Basic Income, and Australia's disabling income support system: Tracing the history of the disability pension from 1908 to today' (2015). Her research interests include critical social policy, historical comparative policy, universal basic income and social protection.

John Tomlinson†, following retirement as Senior Lecturer, Queensland University of Technology (mid 2000s), maintained his political activism toward progressing a basic income strategy in Australia. He completed his doctoral thesis, titled 'Income Maintenance in Australia: The Income Guarantee Alternative' in 1989,

which was awarded by Murdoch University, Western Australia. John's research interests included income maintenance, Basic Income, unemployment, Indigenous struggle, social policy, refugees, and critical theory building. Tomlinson is widely published, particularly on Basic Income, and his publications include the seminal e-book *Income Insecurity: The Basic Income Alternative* (2001). This e-book has been archived in perpetuity by the National Library of Australia.

During the course of co-writing the article and corresponding, John passed away. In the spirit of solidarity, I can only hope I have done justice to our co-joint paper as his words when integrated with mine inspired me to keep writing. We have both long been engaged in the struggle for a fair, just society that is inclusive of basic income.

There, at the Last

There, at the last, after the wine, the champagne,
after the clinking glasses, the toasts,
the merry interchange of voices,
the sky darkens, one after another slips away
following secret paths to where each alone must go,
the noise diminishes save for the sea's restless roar,
the wind's gusty breaths, the sound of every word
being unspoken, every promise annulled,
and behind you, the great shadow of every grief
is set free, departing like a holed balloon,
and you are both weight and lightness together,
waiting on the shore where the boat will come,
there, at the last, when there is no one but you.

DAVID ADÈS,
BEECROFT, NSW.

Trench Digging

The water becomes a new colour
against the yellow belt of beach
that glows like an impossible destination.
Sticks of driftwood rise from the sand
like exclamation marks – a sculpture or elegy
perhaps to the horizon that can never be reached.
And across the sand bar, hazy as angels, people move
towards the long shadows that fall
from the men digging a trench
through the river's soft mouth.
Digging so their boys can coast
to the ocean on boogie boards
just as they did when young;
heedless, until the ranger's intervention,
of the river draining down to its blood red core,
of eels floundering in stagnant pools,
of death from the river's pressure bursting
the channel walls like an unchecked temper;
thinking only of the thrilling breach
a convenient path to the beach.
So the innocence of summer tradition
flounders into long debate around the fire
and next morning the trench is filled in.

ALICE WHITE,
MELBOURNE, VIC.

A Universal Basic Income: What difference might it make?

CHRISTINE MORLEY, PHILLIP ABLETT AND JENNI MAYS

Growing global and national inequality, increased labour insecurity under industrial citizenship, and a shrinking labour market have resulted in an emerging 'precariat' population. Such insecurity, driven by inequalities and intensified by technological developments in robotics and automation, in the capitalist system and neoliberal social policies perpetuates stark division between the wealthy and the poor. Given these transformations, this article explores some examples of current Australian policy and professional practice responses from the human services sector to economic hardship. The critical analysis draws attention to the inadequacies prevalent in the existing Australian welfare system that are reinforced by hegemonic discourses. These same discourses in turn function as a barrier to explorations of alternative regimes of income management such as a Universal Basic Income (UBI). In this article, we also consider the way UBI might respond to some of the problems identified with our current system, and be more beneficial to the precariat.

Introduction

Within the context of widening inequality both globally and nationally (Alvaredo et al. 2018), a vast and growing population is emerging who are increasingly precarious due to being denied multiple forms of labour security under industrial citizenship (Standing 2014). Such insecurity is created by inherent inequalities in the capitalist system, supported by neoliberal social policies that exacerbate profound divisions between rich and poor, and intensified by technological developments in robotics and automation, which are already creating significant job losses (Ford 2015). This is occurring at a time of increased population growth and corresponding increased demand for employment (Peterson 2017). Given this permutation of circumstances, it is timely to examine our current system of income support, which we explore through dominant professional human services responses to economic hardship and related examples of current Australian social policy. Our critical analysis highlights the inadequacies of our current system that are fuelled by hegemonic discourses. These same discourses provide a blockage to the consideration of alternative regimes of income support such as a Universal Basic Income. We also consider how a UBI might address the problems identified with our current system, provide a more ethical response to the precariat, and generally contribute to a more socially just society.

Reflections On Our Current Welfare System

We write this paper from the perspective of critical social work and human services educators who are collectively responsible for teaching students about social theory,

social policy, critical practice, critical self-reflection and sociology. In the context of our teaching, students often share their practice experiences of working with people who are impacted by profound economic inequalities and consequently rendered impoverished. Guy Standing (2014) refers to this growing population as a global 'precariat'. According to Standing (2014: 1), this emergent class of insecure and unemployed workers are not only impacted by inadequate income, and/or precarious work, but deprived of 'community support in times of need, ... assured enterprise or state benefits, and ... private benefits to supplement money earnings'. Standing (2014) suggests the neoliberal project, premised on using principles of competition to maximise development and growth of markets, has created this 'precariat' through increasing labour market 'flexibility' around the world and allowing market principles to colonise all aspects of social existence. According to Standing (2014: 17) the precariat lack multiple forms of labour security, which degrades their industrial citizenship. These include: labour market security (lack of adequate income); employment and work security (erosion of protections and greater barriers in retaining employment or/and achieving high income); skills reproduction security (lack of opportunities for professional development or training); income support security (inadequate pensions and benefit levels); and representational security (diminished collective and unionised supports).

Unfortunately, our welfare system, in its current (denuded) neoliberal form, does not offer services for people who are systematically disadvantaged

by neoliberal capitalism or denied multiple forms of labour security under industrial citizenship. Instead, our students come into contact with members of the precariat in the context of professional roles that have been largely established to respond to the consequences of the structural causes of wealth inequality and poverty (as if they are private troubles), rather than to address structural causes (Morley and Ablett 2016). As such, our students are often placed (as part of their field education experiences¹) in organisations focused on income support and/or crisis relief services associated with poverty, which means the precariat are frequently viewed through the neoliberal lens of individual responsibility. This lens justifies practices that exacerbate social divisions, such as the imposition of budgeting counselling instead of addressing the issue of inadequate access to funds, ultimately blaming people for their impoverishment (Agllias et al. 2016; Kruner-Nevo et al. 2009) Marston and McDonald 2008; Morley and Ablett 2016; Mullaly 2010).

Some students tell us, for example, that to be homeless is a choice. Until presented with the evidence that people become homeless predominantly because of a lack of affordable housing (not poor choices) (Ellwood 2017), many students' views mirror hegemonic discourses. These discourses reflect and perpetuate common misconceptions that depart quite significantly from the realities of inequality. Students have disclosed, for example, their concerns that some people 'know' that they can only access a \$20 voucher at their food co-op every six weeks, but some of 'these people' might come in at four week, or even two week intervals. Discussion of such incidents is met with considerable disapproval. In response to this situation, one particular student remarked: 'Why are they in crisis all the time? Aren't they budgeting?' Clearly people accessing these services who are carrying the burden of being impoverished, do not benefit from being negatively judged by the professionals entrusted with the responsibility of helping them.

Some students tell us that their clients' stories sound 'dodgy', and that they assume people coming to food relief services are trying to access 'more [resources] than their fair share'. One student recently relayed how disappointed he was that a person he was working with had 'lied to [his] face'. He was outraged by the disparity he felt he had uncovered between the mothers' assertion that she had not spent any money on alcohol, and his discovery in 'going through her bank statements' that revealed evidence that they had made a purchase at a retailer that sells alcohol. As critical educators, the lack of basic privacy that this woman was denied, the indignity of having to justify her spending, the humiliation of having to surrender her bank statements for scrutiny, and the violations that this student practitioner was unthinkingly engaging in as part of routine organisational practice, are all equally disturbing and unacceptable.

This means the precariat are constructed as 'dishonest', 'manipulative' and 'greedy' by the practitioners who purport to 'help' them. We recognise that these views represent contemporary dominant discourses about the impoverished, and consequently impact on practice as well as social policy responses. People who are unemployed, accessing income support, and/or emergency support services, due to experiencing poverty, are subjected to assessments about whether they are deserving or undeserving, based on informal judgments about their morality (Mays 2016). These assessments are not dissimilar to the 1800s English Poor Laws that were similarly adopted in Australia from the early 1900s, promoting victim-blaming responses to poverty and inequality (Tomlinson 2016).

Arguably then, our current welfare responses to people adversely affected by inequality have not significantly progressed in more than a century, except that we seem to have developed more complex administrative systems to judge and shame people who are impoverished. In assisting us to make sense of this, Paul Michael Garrett's work on *Welfare Words* provides some answers. In tracing the impact of neoliberal discourses on social policy and social work practice, Garrett (2018: 49) notes how the term, 'social security', which reflects a system of support for citizens has disappeared from public discourse, and been replaced with the concept of 'welfare dependency'; thus shifting responsibility away from the state and onto individuals for their economic survival, even if they are systematically excluded by social structures from earning an income. The concept of welfare dependency brings our focus to those in need in a way that legitimates the punitive systems of surveillance to which they are subjected (Garrett 2018: 49), while simultaneously disguising the broader political and economic conditions that create wealth inequality and poverty. Such discursive shifts, which hold considerable material and practical implications, cannot be underestimated in their impact on blocking the consideration of alternative income management regimes such as introducing a UBI.

Not only embedded within discourse, social policies similarly reflect individualised, victim-blaming analyses of poverty. One punitive example of surveillance is the Australian Federal Government's initiative of mandatory drug testing for people receiving income support. Despite a lack of evidence to suggest a causal link between unemployment and drug abuse, people receiving income support that test positive, will have their welfare payments deposited onto a cashless debit card², and they may be required to undergo drug treatment programs under 'mutual obligation requirements' (Arthur 2017). The rationale for this policy decision according to Social Services Minister, Christian Porter, is that mandatory drug testing will foster 'behavioural change' to 'remove drug

use as a barrier for employment' (Porter and Tudge 2017). Yet, as a lack of employment is the biggest contributing factor to unemployment, it is difficult to see how this demeaning policy will promote employment. Queensland Council of Social Services (QCOSS) CEO Mark Henley described the policy as 'harsh' and 'counter-productive'. He cautioned that, 'Mandatory drug testing trials further stigmatise people needing to access our income support system' and emphasised that, 'treating people humanely and with dignity has a positive impact on the whole community' (Henley and Murphy 2018: np).

Even without the mandatory drug-testing component, the cashless debit card reinforces the assumption that poor choices and irresponsible spending are responsible for poverty. Quite apart from punishing welfare recipients who have tested positive to drug use, the current Australian Federal Government has targeted (and therefore further stigmatised) known low socio-economic areas (including the Ceduna region in South Australia, the Goldfields and East Kimberley regions in Western Australia and the Bundaberg and Hervey Bay regions in Queensland) by introducing the cashless debit card for all welfare recipients in these regions (excepting Veteran and aged pension recipients). The justification for this decision is to provide an apparent solution for localities where so-called welfare dependency and social harm are high (Australian Government 2019). This correlation between the lack of adequate income and other social problems is unsurprising, given that research demonstrates that profound wealth and income inequalities are implicated in causing a range of social issues including increased rates of crime, violence, suicide, and mental illness (Wilkinson and Pickett 2010; Douglas et al. 2014: 14). Yet the cashless debit card is premised on the idea that restricting the purchases of recipients will reduce the social problems that accompany poverty. In reality, there is little opportunity to buy luxuries, with research showing that Australia's unemployment welfare benefit sits 20% below the poverty line (Denniss and Baker 2012). In fact, OECD (2011) data indicates that the Newstart allowance is the second lowest unemployment benefit, relative to the minimum wage, in the world. Despite these critiques, the cashless debit card is publicised as the best solution (Australian Government 2019).

Underpinning this policy direction is the principal assumption that income support is an expensive drain on the taxation base for the country. However, of Australia's Gross Domestic Product in 2017 of A\$1.69 trillion (ABS 2018), only 9.6 billion or less than 0.5% of the GDP was spent on the Newstart Allowance. This amount can be compared to other OECD countries that spend in excess of 3% of GDP on social assistance programs and income security³ for their citizens (Richardson and Denniss 2014). The basis of the policy then serves only

to deflect attention from the elite's monopoly of resources. In fact, the wealthiest 1% of the Australian population have accumulated resources equivalent to those owned by the poorest 70% (Oxfam Australia 2018, 2016). The wealthiest seven individuals now have more wealth than the poorest 20% of the Australian population (1.73 million households) (Richardson and Denniss 2014). Exacerbating this inequality are structural forces that impact people disproportionately. For example, the lowest paid workers have seen only a negligible increase in wages since the mid 1990s (1995-2012), while the top 5% of the most highly paid workers have almost doubled their weekly income (Australian Council of Social Service and University of New South Wales 2018: 25).

These wage disparities are occurring at a time when Australia is now among the lowest ten taxing countries in the OECD. As a nation, we are also one of only two OECD countries that do not have a contributory income social insurance/security tax scheme in place for contingencies such as losing one's job or retirement (Campbell and Murray 2018; OECD 2017), which means wage earners may take home higher pay, but have access to fewer universal government services. Hence we rely increasingly on user-pays services with up-front or deferred fees and premiums that further disadvantage the poor. It also means that welfare recipients continued to be policed by highly conditional programs, because the tax base is not wide enough to pay for decent services. Neoliberal ideology is particularly effective in this context because it convinces people that they should 'get a job', which it is assumed enables them to 'look after themselves'.

Meanwhile, automation also threatens employment, resulting in a significant reduction of the labour market. Global predictions include that 'robots will replace 5 million workers by 2020' and that globally 47% of all jobs may cease to exist within the next two decades (Esteves 2017). One US study that surveyed 700 categories of jobs, concluded that almost half of all employment would 'ultimately be susceptible to full machine automation' (University of Oxford's Martin School in 2013 cited in Ford 2015: 121). Such technological developments, combined with increased population growth do not create the conditions for full employment. One Australian study, for example, has shown that unemployment is now 340% higher than it was in the early 1970s (Mitchell 2015), indicating significant loss of paid employment opportunities, and a corresponding expansion of the precariat.

While our role as educators seeks to disrupt hegemonic attitudes towards people experiencing poverty, the current welfare system and social policies all operate to obfuscate the underlying structural causes of poverty. This

highlights the need for critical education that addresses the structural factors implicated in causing poverty, the profound economic and social inequalities inherent in global capitalism, and the impact of austerity style public provisions, which have been a focus of our work elsewhere (see for example Morley and Ablett 2016). However, here we explore how systemic changes in social security provision might make a difference in repudiating victim-blaming understandings of poverty and activate the social work and human service professions to advocate for progressive change. In this vein, we explore the difference a Universal Basic Income might make towards ameliorating poverty, improving the plight of the precariat, and contributing to a more socially just society.

Universal Basic Income

Unlike our current system of income support, a Universal Basic Income (UBI hereafter) is paid to each citizen, not a family or household, regardless of income or assets; and it is obligation-free, which means it is a right that is not tied to work requirements (Scialabba 2017; Van Parijs 1991, 1992, 2005).

Instead of blaming victims, as is evident in our current system, BI recognises that capitalist economies have failed to provide adequate paid employment opportunities for all who need them, and that this situation may worsen in the future unless radical policy changes occur. Hence BI can act as a safety net to prevent precariousness. As Steensland (2006: 1289) states: BI is 'premised on a structural view of poverty that challenge[s] the normative and programmatic grounds for categorizing the poor based upon their perceived worthiness'.

Commenting on the US context, Steensland (2006) suggests liberal capitalist societies do not guarantee a BI security for all citizens because of our embeddedness in notions of the 'undeserving poor', with the corresponding view that some members of society are not worthy of government assistance. Our current system punishes people who accept the low-income, training-poor jobs that generally represent the only employment options available to welfare-recipients.

Conversely, given that BI is designed as a universal scheme, recipients are not subjected to judgement, ridicule and stigmatisation (Van Parijs 2005: 14). In addition, because BI provides a regular income, (regardless of paid work), it removes the poverty trap associated with accepting low paying jobs (or even worse, poverty traps of income support programmes that claw back earnings from paid work); thus creating an incentive to work for BI recipients by increasing incomes (Scialabba 2017; Van Parijs 2005: 4) This is appealing for proponents of BI, both on the left and right of politics. Moreover, it redresses

the costly over-bureaucratisation of the existing system by removing administrative complexities associated with targeting and assessing for eligibility (Jenkins 2019: 29; Tomlinson 1991).

The precarious nature of work reflects our current context in which the power of unions, and consequently industrial conditions, have been significantly eroded in many sectors since the Work Choices legislation by the conservative Howard Government in 2005 (Commonwealth of Australia 2005). This has exacerbated casualised, uncertain, potentially exploitative working conditions, which solidify the disadvantage experienced by the precariat (Standing 2014). A key benefit of BI in this context is the steady income it will provide for those with precarious work (Standing 2014; Stern, 2016). Given the significant correlation between unstable income and mental distress (Ferguson 2017), Jenkins (2019: 27) points out 'Obviously, a GBI [Guaranteed Basic Income] would reduce the anxiety and income instability of this situation, providing a cushion for those who cannot work' (Jenkins 2019: 27); and also reduce the stress-related adverse health impacts of continually having to look for a job (Howgego 2019). Moreover, a BI would allow 'people to choose not to work for periods of time or to refuse to work for inadequate remuneration' (Jenkins 2019: 27). Therefore, a BI would significantly reduce the vulnerability experienced by the precariat because it would provide the financial means to leave workplaces that do not offer reasonable conditions. As Jenkins (2019: 28) notes, workers who are not treated well would be able to withdraw from exploitative or unjust conditions with BI providing a 'permanent strike fund'. She further notes that 'It is possible that a GBI could mobilize individuals into looser, more ad-hoc collectivities that are better suited to contemporary forms of precarious or contract labour than more bureaucratized institutions such as trade unions' (Jenkins 2019: 28). Observing this almost three decades ago, Van Parijs (1991: 105) similarly argued that: '... there is no doubt that an unconditional income confers upon the weakest more bargaining power in their dealings with both potential employers and the state' (Van Parijs 1991: 105).

In improving industrial freedoms, a BI could also potentially insulate workers against the poverty resulting from expected mass job losses associated with increasing automation of the labour market. While some commentators fear that introducing a BI could lead to an acceleration of job losses created by technology (Bruun and Duka 2018; Jenkins 2019), others researching the impact of technological advances suggest that significant job losses will occur (Ford 2015) with or without a BI. According to Savchuk (2019: 44), for example, 'A growing chorus of Silicon Valley executives ha[ve] called [a universal basic income] policy inevitable, as automation threatens to displace one-third of American workers by

2030, raising the spectre of unemployed masses rioting in the streets'. Savchuk (2019: 44; see also Standing 2014) further notes that the rapid consequences of technology for employment have initiated several BI trials in places including Barcelona, Namibia, Canada, Finland, Kenya, India, Uganda, and Switzerland. These BI pilots are crucial for creating the conditions for implementing a BI and embedding environmental justice, liberty, gender equality, social and democratic citizenship, a flexible and just labour market and shared ownership of the commons (Young and Mulvale 2009: 3).

Moving beyond right-to-work initiatives, which frame 'work' narrowly in terms of a paid employment, a key benefit of BI is that it provides an opportunity to choose an occupation, whether that role is paid or not. Hence BI offers a potential redefinition of work that involves valuing 'activities that combine creativity, conceptual and analytic thought and manual or physical use of aptitudes' (Perez 2003 cited in Harvey 2005: 8; see also Scialabba 2017: 20) that may have a range of potential benefits for society as a whole. Furthermore, the concept of BI potentially transforms 'work' from being a commodity that is regarded only for its exchange value, or its capacity to foster the acquisition of more material resources, into a much wider proposition (Jenkins 2019: 27).

This redefinition of work potentially has implications for addressing the devaluing of 'women's work', including community work and unpaid child care and domestic labour in the private sphere. It enables people (including men) to devote time to such socially necessary and valuable labour (Howgego 2019). While a BI would not facilitate this directly, 'indirectly[,] it could set into motion a variety of forces that de-stratify the very notion of women's work' (Jenkins 2019: 31). Other gender equity promoting potential impacts of BI include opening up options for women's further education or occupations of their choice. As an individual provision, women would have greater financial security, bargaining power, and the means to leave violent relationships (Jenkins 2019: 31).

BI's transformation of 'work' from being a commodity that is only thought of for its exchange value, involves a shift to a more inclusive construction that offers choice and opportunity to pursue sustainable, meaningful activities (Jenkins, 2019: 32). Van Parijs (1991) argues that in de-commodifying the idea of work, BI aligns with social and environmental justice in the pursuit of sustainable lifestyles that are not resource intensive.

Concerns about a Universal Basic Income (BI)

Indeed, BI offers much hope in eradicating poverty, improving the living conditions of the precariat, and

contributing to a more socially just society. However, not everyone shares this view (Harvey 2005; Maskivker 2018; Tcherneva and Wray 2008: 3; Young and Mulvale 2009). Young and Mulvale (2009: 4) summarise the key concerns about BI as 1) providing a disincentive to work, 2) being too expensive to be politically viable and 3) formalising a lack of reciprocity, that is giving resources to those who may apparently 'contribute nothing in return' (see Elster 1986; White 1997).

As critical educators, we find these critiques unconvincing: Firstly, there is no evidence to support the notion that a BI provides a disincentive to work. Within a capitalist society, it is unlikely that people will cease to desire material possessions beyond that which they will be able to afford with a BI. Indeed for two years from December 2016, the Finnish government conducted a trial of BI with 2000 people who were unemployed. At the conclusion of the experiment they found when comparing the income, employment status and general wellbeing of this group with a control group of 5000 who continued to receive the usual unemployment benefits, there was little variation in the number of days employed; this indicated that the BI provided no disincentive to work. However, the trial did impact the group receiving the BI in positive ways, as they reported significantly less stress and better health than the control group (Howgego 2019).

Secondly, while some critics (such as Harvey 2005), talk about the high cost of BI as being prohibitive to implementation, we reject this claim, acknowledging that the potential taxation base of our nation is considerable. In our view, introducing a wealth tax and appropriately taxing the rich, would be absolutely necessary to ensure that the BI is adequately funded and can genuinely provide an adequate standard of living. Australia's untapped taxation revenue is considerable and could indeed be used to fund a BI. According to the Australian Tax Office's third tax transparency report (cited in Hutchens 2017) 36% of multi-national firms and large companies paid next to no tax, even when they received excessively large revenues (such as Adani's \$724million revenue; see Hutchens 2017 for full list). If we were to tax these companies at the same rate as individuals who earn over \$180,000 (that is at 45%), the potential tax from these companies alone would be enough to sustain a full BI and introduce tax equity (Stevens and Simpson 2017: 120).

Thirdly, any critique about the lack of reciprocity denies the many ways that people make contributions to society that are unpaid. Their contributions may be significant even through they are not recognised. We would also point to Sayer's (2016) argument that highlights how costly the wealthy elite's monopoly of resources is for the rest of humanity.

Critiques of BI that are more arguably persuasive include that it would not recompense involuntarily unemployed workers for their lack of waged labour (Harvey 2005). We agree, but if paid at a level that is above the poverty line and appropriately indexed, BI would protect people against poverty and related stresses including the stigmatisation associated with being a welfare recipient. Harvey (2005: 29) warns that a BI would not 'compensate people who preferred non-waged employment for the work they performed'. This is not entirely accurate as many people engage in unpaid work without compensation or recognition. Setting BI at an adequate level supports people to pursue unpaid activities of their choosing, which in itself is compensatory. Further, many 'non-waged' citizens spend their time hunting for jobs that do not exist (Watts 2016: 77) instead of performing other labour that might be preferable and productive. Harvey (2005: 29-30) also notes that BI 'would be unlikely to lead to any increase in the availability of paid employment for those people who want it' and 'could not be counted on to force an improvement in the quality of low wage work and might even cause it to decline'. We would agree with the first point, for BI makes no claim about increasing paid employment opportunities. We also concede that it would not necessarily improve the quality of employment; but if people had a reliable BI, as noted earlier, they would not be forced to accept poor quality work in order to survive.

Harvey (2005) argues that 'rather than eliminating "bad" jobs, a BI guarantee might subsidize them, allowing employers to lower wages rather than raise them' (Harvey 2005: 36). Related to this, other critics suggest BI may 'make it even easier for capital to dictate its terms to labour, since they know that workers will be taken care of by the state' (Gorz 1999: 82). Outlining an alarming scenario, (Gorz 1999: 82) suggests that in addition to widespread dismissals and lowering wages, 'employers might defer wage demands back to the state and tell unions to negotiate with public bodies in order to increase their GBI allocations'. We agree, particularly within our neoliberal policy dominated context, that these are concerns are valid. Current legislation that allows exploitative practices and insecure conditions must be changed to improve the industrial protections of all workers. This should include protections of the minimum wage so that BI is not able to be used to merely 'subsidize capital' (Gorz 1999: 82). We also emphasise that while BI should replace other kinds of direct income support that are means tested and stigmatised, it must not be used to justify any cuts to other social security measures that support health, education, welfare and other kinds of social infrastructure (Jenkins 2019: 28).

Concluding comments

Overall, we agree with Arnsperger and Johnson (2011: 61) who argue the need for social security provisions that

'embody the ideal of a genuinely just society in this time of ecological and social turmoil'. They further suggest:

The various public authorities' main task should be to secure for all citizens an equal opportunity of access to a realized and effective, non-growth-obsessed, frugal, or convivial existence, lived on a one-to-one scale in real time and on real ground (Arnsperger and Johnson 2011: 62).

This paper suggests that a BI might make this possible through its creation of choice for citizens, its impact of improving of industrial conditions (in strengthening the capacity of workers to reject poor conditions), and creating a redefinition of work that enables creative, community-based and care-ethics-based occupations to emerge, and the valuing of non-waged forms of labour, which potentially addresses indirectly the devaluing of unpaid work traditionally associated with women, and holds positive impacts for the environment. Such a social provision is necessary since neoliberal policy has concentrated wealth and power with the elite, destroyed the welfare state, and produced profound inequalities resulting in a precariat who are being denied their economic security and dignity; creating in the words of Giroux (2015: 126), a 'very bleak emotional and economic landscape' for ... 99 percent of the population'.

Clearly there is a compelling case for BI to be considered a progressive response to social security provision and address structural inequalities, poverty, precarity and negative perceptions of clients. It is in this regard of BI being a progressive response that makes BI important for critical education and advocacy. BI as a universal and unconditional provision emphasises a commitment to social justice and redresses the negative framing of welfare recipients found in dominant neoliberal approaches. BI has an important function in restructuring the social protection and taxation revenue systems, which in turn responds to unjust practices that perpetuate the victim blaming and targeting of welfare recipients.

While BI is not a panacea, this article has argued that it is a hopeful strategy to moderate the worst aspects of widening wealth inequality by eliminating poverty, improving the living conditions of the precariat, and generally contributing to a more equitable and socially just society. Such outcomes therefore fulfil many of the espoused aims of the professions in which we teach, and provide counter-hegemonic ways to understand exclusion from the labour market and impoverishment; these trends are expected to grow, if neoliberal policy and automation continue to increase unemployment. While providing a BI universally does not in itself lessen all forms of inequality, funding BI necessitates progressive taxation reform (Raventós 2007) which would have a more significant

impact. We suggest that BI should not be viewed in isolation, but introduced in conjunction with a suite of other progressive measures and protections including a work guarantee, an asset guarantee, progressive taxation, labour protection, and other social security measures, which offer possibilities to seriously overhaul our current profoundly undemocratic system. By taking these steps we can achieve a more just and sustainable form of social provision that enables us to better meet the needs of all people and build a better society.

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End Notes

1. Students studying Human Services undertake 2 placements totalling 550 hours of practice in the field as part of their studies. Students studying Social Work undertake 2 placements totalling 1000 hours of practice in the field as part of their studies.
2. Cashless Debit Cards function the same as other bank cards and are used by welfare recipients to access money from Centrelink. However, conditions are applied to cashless debit cards, whereby 80% of the welfare payment is paid directly onto the Cashless Debit Card (and is subject to controls over the type of goods a person can access), with the remaining 20% going into the recipients' regular bank account (Australian Government 2019).
3. In comparative analysis, the comparison is between the Australian unemployment provision known as the Newstart Allowance, which is similar to other Western developed countries (UK, USA, and so forth) social assistance programs, in terms of being measures of 'last resort'. However, the figures do account for other forms of social protection for income security (such as social insurance) implemented in other countries, given the distinct conceptual differences between non-contributory income support schemes (as with Australia) and social insurance models adopted in other countries, such as Germany.

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Authors

Christine Morley is Professor of and Head of Social Work and Human Services at the Queensland University of Technology. Her intellectual passions include exploring the possibilities for critical social work and critical reflection to make a contribution to social work as an emancipatory project. She has published widely in these areas including two authored books: *Practising Critical Reflection to Develop Emancipatory Change* (Routledge, 2014), *Engaging with Social Work: A Critical Introduction* (2nd edn), (with Selma Macfarlane and Phillip Ablett) (Cambridge, 2019).

Phillip Ablett is Senior Lecturer in Sociology at the University of the Sunshine Coast. His research interests include critical theory, social inequality, and community development in the Philippines, the history of social work and critical social work education. He is co-author of the introductory Australian text, *Engaging with Social Work: A Critical Introduction* (2nd edn, 2019) (with Christine Morley and Selma Macfarlane).

Jenni Mays is Senior Lecturer in social policy at the Queensland University of Technology. She is the lead author of *Basic Income in Australia and New Zealand: Perspectives from the Neoliberal Frontier*, with Greg Marston and John Tomlinson; and 'Disability, citizenship, and Basic Income, and Australia's disabling income support system: Tracing the history of the disability pension from 1908 to today' (2015). Her research interests include critical social policy, historical comparative policy, universal basic income and social protection policy.

Basic Income Plus: Is UBI consistent with the goals of the Independent Living Movement?

SIMON DUFFY AND JIM ELDER-WOODWARD

The relationship between Universal Basic Income (UBI) and disability needs more discussion. Although basic income will bring some benefits for disabled people, the UBI that everyone is entitled to may not meet the extra costs that disabled people face in order to live an independent life in the community. This means that we must define an additional concept of Basic Income Plus (UBI+). The 'plus' is the amount that will meet the extra costs faced by disabled people¹ in exercising their citizenship. There is also important resistance to the idea of UBI by some within the disabled people's Independent Living Movement. Understanding and overcoming this resistance may prove important to the long-term success of UBI. In particular, it is argued here that the UBI community would benefit from attending to the core purpose of the Independent Living Movement, and to identifying the empowerment of potential as the ultimate goal of UBI.

Defining UBI+

Most advocates of Universal Basic Income (UBI) understand UBI as a transformative and liberating reform of income security. Many potential benefits have been identified: increased exercise of citizenship rights and responsibilities, personal liberation, the fulfilment of moral and ethical ideals, and many others (Duffy 2016a: 39; Raventós 2007; Torry 2015, 2016). So it may seem surprising that relatively little attention has been paid to the potential benefits (or risks) that UBI creates for disabled people. Here we will argue that this is a twofold error and that not only has UBI much to offer disabled people, but also that the movement for Independent Living, led by disabled people, has much to teach the UBI movement.

There is a tendency in discussions of UBI to treat the needs of disabled people, and any necessary reforms of disability benefits in the light of UBI, as a matter of additional complexity, to which attention must be paid at some future date (Torry 2013: 266). Of course, no advocate of UBI excludes disabled people from receiving UBI, but by treating the reform of disability benefits as a secondary problem it may appear that the needs of disabled people are not addressed by UBI or that they are somehow less important. It is our contention that the needs of disabled people should be central to discussions of UBI, and the question of how to adapt UBI for disabled people should be addressed as a matter of urgency (Elder-Woodward and Duffy 2018). We have adopted the term Basic Income Plus (UBI+) to describe

a model of UBI that includes additional payments to address people's additional needs.

As shown in Figure 1 below, UBI+ builds on the universal component of a UBI for all but then provides additional resources for three logically distinct, but compatible reasons:

1. To the extent that disabled people face disadvantage in finding paid work it would be possible to create an income supplement to reduce the level of relative poverty experienced by disabled people.
2. To the extent that disabled people face extra costs and barriers in their ability to function as equal citizens then it would be possible to create an income supplement to meet those extra costs.
3. To the extent that disabled people have need for extra assistance, then any necessary budget for that assistance could be transferred into the direct control of disabled people.

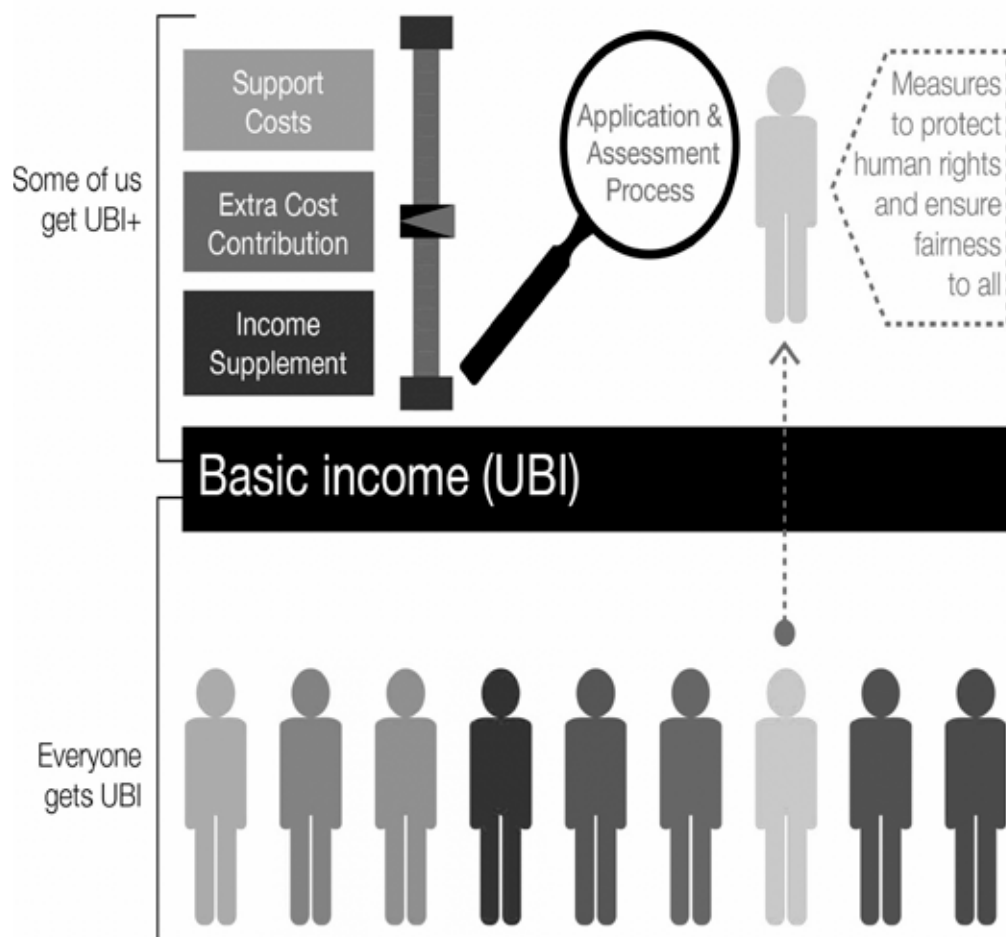


Figure 1: Universal Basic Income.

This model raises a number of further questions that would also need to be explored; but for the purposes of this article we are going to assume:

- A. The extra income supplements would be introduced in accordance with the spirit of UBI, that is it '... unconditionally has three aspects. First there would be no income conditions, that is no means testing ... Second there would be no spending conditions ... Third there would be no behavioural conditions, requiring people to behave in certain ways and not others ...' (Standing 2017: 6).
- B. There would still need to be some kind of assessment or claim process for the additional elements. This process should be designed with disabled people to be empowering and respectful. Obviously, this would be radically different from the medical and professionalised models of assessment currently being used.

However, within the limits of this article, we want to focus on three questions:

1. What are the potential benefits of UBI+ to disabled people?
2. Why do some disability leaders reject the idea of UBI?
3. What strategy, if any, could reconcile these different movements for social justice?

The Benefits of UBI+

The most obvious benefit of UBI for disabled people is that it reduces poverty and is also associated with a wide range of wider benefits including: better mental and physical health, reduced domestic violence, increased IQ and better educational outcomes (Standing 2017; Torry 2015). All disabled people would benefit from these changes, but given that they are more likely to be in poverty than other groups, then they would tend to benefit more than most from these improvements (Elwan 1999).

The second benefit of UBI for disabled people is that it would eliminate a chronic insecurity built into most welfare systems. For instance, many systems of income security, like the Employment Support Allowance (ESA) in the UK, are organised so that the whole of your income

is dependent on proving the negative impact of your impairment on your ability to work. This assessment process is inherently negative and stressful (Saffer et al. 2018). But this stress is made even worse by the fact that if you feel you have been wrongly assessed and you try to challenge their assessment then you will not be put onto a lower benefit. Instead you will be treated as if you are entitled to nothing until your challenge reaches the tribunal. There is also an in-built delay, often of several months, while the benefit agency 'reconsiders' your claim before a case can go to tribunal. To receive any income you must borrow from friends and relatives during the wait, or beg for food from the growing number of charitable 'foodbanks' (Garthwaite 2016).

It is not clear yet how people who have failed disability tests will be treated under the UK's new system of Universal Credit (UC), but the situation looks likely to be even worse, since you might also lose the housing element of UC during a dispute. Even if you are successful under the UC, you may need to wait six weeks or more to get your first payment. So UBI+ would radically increase income security because the core UBI element of a cash grant would be received automatically, whatever the result of your disability assessment.

This is not just a technical change, for the intrinsic purpose of UBI is to overturn the strangely illiberal assumptions of neoliberalism: that people lack social rights and that it is the job of the state to direct and control citizens for the sake of an economic system which benefits the better-off. In the UK these illiberal assumptions have led to a welfare reform agenda which has deployed a dubious 'biopsychosocial' assessment of disability developed by medical practitioners (Waddell and Aylward 2005). Their theories on and practices of assessment led to the UK Government's Work Capability Assessment (WCA) and a harmful Work Programme (Hale 2014; Shakespeare et al. 2017; Stewart 2018). The WCA has also led to increased levels of suicide and mental illness (Barr et al. 2015). Instead of all this, UBI+ starts from a foundation of human rights and a commitment to support the freedom and security of everyone, whatever their impairment.

The third benefit of UBI+ is that it radically removes the poverty-traps caused by means-testing and conditionality, and enables people to do paid work on terms that make sense to the individual. Many disabled people can and want to carry out paid work; but they cannot necessarily work in exactly the same way as other people. For example, people with chronic illness may go through prolonged periods of incapacity; yet may also be able to do periods of paid work when they have adequate energy levels (Hale 2018: 11). Of course, opportunities for paid work also will depend on employers or customers; but UBI increases the ability to negotiate reasonable accommodations,

while maintaining reasonable incentives. You will never be made worse off by taking paid work and you will be taxed on your new earnings at the same rate as other citizens; no longer will you have to pay an effective tax rate close to or, sometimes even exceeding 100% (Duffy and Dalrymple 2014).

Fourthly, UBI+ helps achieve a long-standing objective of the Disabled People's Independent Living movement (hereafter referred to as the Movement), by establishing a universal system for funding care or support – what is sometimes called individualised funding or personal budgets. There has been important progress in disability rights in shifting control over service funding into the hands of disabled people (Duffy 2018a). However, these systems are often complex and unreliable, often applying multiple criteria for eligibility as well as means-testing.

The recent development of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) in Australia follows an international trend towards shifting power and control towards disabled people, in accordance with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCPRD) and the demands of disabled people and families (Duffy 2013). However, this trend often faces resistance from the bureaucracies and other interests that it threatens. Often, funding remains controlled or constrained and people are unable to use it as they see fit (Duffy 2012). In some countries (like the UK and the USA), funding for disability support is also severely means-tested (Coalition on Charging 2008). But, by including personal budgets within the UBI+ model, it becomes easier to both increase personal control over support and to end the application of means-testing to disability support services.

The fifth benefit of UBI+ is political. Disabled people would share a common cause with all other citizens in ensuring that the base UBI level was set at the highest feasible level. Advocates of UBI, those fighting poverty and inequality, would have an important ally in the Movement if these causes were clearly linked by a common framework. Currently this is not the case, for disability-related benefits are disconnected from unemployment benefits and there is no advantage to disabled people from increases in unemployment benefit, and no advantage to unemployed people from increases in disability benefit. Worse, not only are the economic interests of these two groups disconnected, both are also subject to separate prejudice and scapegoating while this can also further undermine the alliances necessary to advance social justice.

In the UK, as neoliberalism has advanced, there have been increasing efforts to apply judgmental concepts based on meritocratic assumptions, such as labelling the

poor as an 'underclass' and treating them as less than human. Television coverage of the lives of people using and abusing welfare services has only led to their greater vilification by the general population (Esmark and Schoop 2017). It is not surprising that many disabled people want to distance themselves from these stigmatised groups. At the same time, the UK has also seen a rise in hate crime directed against disabled people, often on the presumption that people are faking their disability to claim extra benefits. This has been widely promoted by the right-wing media (Roulstone and Mason-Bish 2013). So, while some fear that disabled people are faking their disability to gain unjustified advantages; some disabled people fear they must prove their incapacity to work to make sure they are not mistaken for the unemployed or the poor. Mutual suspicion is a poor basis for coherent social action and resistance to injustice.

The Fear of UBI

It is a mistake to treat disabled people as a homogeneous group. There are many different disability groups, categorised by different impairments or by different histories of resistance to injustice. There are many people who might be defined as a person with a disability by others, but who do not identify themselves in this way, or who would identify themselves by some other aspects of identity, such as their faith, politics or place.

However, there is a line of argument strongly critical of UBI which can be identified with an important strand within the Movement, and which has been clearly expressed by several of its leaders. A particularly strong and clear case, which brings together a number of key themes, has been made by the UK campaigning organisation Disabled People Against the Cuts (known as DPAC) and we will use this argument as our primary source for outlining importance resistance to UBI (DPAC 2018).

The disabled people who lead the Movement are not alone in noticing that UBI is supported by both opponents of neoliberalism and by some of its advocates. This gives rise to multiple fears, including: that the UBI level will be too low; that it will function as a subsidy to employers; that it will lead to diminished employment rights or that it will be funded by cutting other essential services. There is a particular fear that UBI will be funded by cutting disability benefits, services, provisions and the regulations that support disabled people to be equal citizens within society at large. As DPAC state '... a welcome mat for the introduction of a UBI legitimises the neoliberal agenda of undermining social provision, increasing the rate of exploitation and disregarding the needs of disabled people' (DPAC 2019: 5).

The second criticism of UBI is that it is utopian and that feasible models of UBI would not be sufficiently generous

to reduce poverty, while an appropriate/acceptable level of UBI could not be afforded without excessive tax increases. Here DPAC cites research by Martinelli and his claim: 'The unavoidable reality is that such schemes either have unacceptable distributional consequences or they simply cost too much' (Martinelli 2017: i).

There is of course an interesting tension between the first claim, that UBI is compatible with neoliberalism and the second claim, that UBI requires a higher level of progressive taxation than is politically feasible. However, it is certainly fair for DPAC to observe that some advocates of UBI trade on its compatibility with both right-wing and left-wing agendas; and it is also true that advocates of UBI are often vague about the level of UBI they think reasonable, as well as the form of taxation that would fund it.

There is here an important lesson. In the era of neoliberalism, policies that please the centre and which pander to current assumptions are unlikely to win support from those, like disabled people, who are suffering most from the injustices caused by the current constellation of regressive forces and cuts to social programs. So, in the context of these ongoing experiences of marginalisation and oppression, it is not surprising that DPAC is very concerned that the World Bank's recent advocacy of UBI is closely linked to its desire to create a different kind of workforce where employers can offer less security because social systems are designed to provide the necessary platform of income security. The World Bank states, 'Changes in the nature of work caused by technology shift the pattern of demanding workers' benefits from employers to directly demanding welfare benefits from the state. These changes raise questions about the ongoing relevance of current labour laws' (World Bank 2019: 27).

For disabled people the idea that employers should be supported to reduce employment rights is deeply problematic. Reducing the obligations on employers does not seem progressive nor helpful to the disabled people's independent living movement. As DPAC puts it:

As a reform for labour, it is not as good as the demand for a job for all who need it at a living wage; or reducing the working week while maintaining wages; or providing decent pensions; or making full reasonable adjustments for disabled workers including guaranteeing sick pay and disability leave. These are demands that we need to be putting loudly here and now alongside calling for full and unconditional support for those of us unable to work (DPAC 2019: 24).

DPAC's perspective is rooted in the long-standing battle of disabled people to overcome prejudice and exclusion, in particular exclusion from the benefits associated with being in employment – something which brings, not just income, but also status.

As industrialisation grew, so did the exclusion of disabled people from industrial society under both capitalism and communism (Storach 2016; Phillips 2011). In the UK this exclusion was challenged by the Union of the Physically Impaired Against Segregation (UPIAS) who defined disability as follows:

... it is necessary to grasp the distinction between the physical impairment and the social situation, called 'disability', of people with such impairment. Thus we define impairment as lacking part of or all of a limb, or having a defective limb, organ or mechanism of the body; and disability as the disadvantage or restriction of activity caused by a contemporary social organisation which takes no or little account of people who have physical impairments and thus excludes them from participation in the mainstream of social activities. Physical disability is therefore a particular form of social oppression (UPIAS 1976: 14).

It is not impairments which bar participation in the labour market, or society at large, but the attitudinal, environmental, organisational and cultural barriers which exist within them. Against this, leading advocates of UBI, such as Guy Standing, have proposed that the case for UBI is closely linked to the way in which automation, economic change and the global economy have led to the creation of a precariat as a growing and potentially dangerous class, many of whom can be mobilised to increase social instability (Standing 2011). In other words, the economy is changing and moving to a decrease in paid labour while market conditions and technological change tend to favour organisations that reduce labour costs and minimise those with higher employment costs. However, it is perfectly consistent for disabled people to see such a precariat, not as a natural outcome of economic change, but as another group being actively excluded from equal participation within society, just as disabled people are actively excluded. DPAC is right to challenge the idea that any group of people can be made redundant and ostracised from society.

These are important criticisms which cut to one of the most important philosophical questions of our time: what is the purpose of life and is paid employment the best means to advance human development? In fact, this question probably divides both advocates of UBI and the Movement. If the creation of meaning and value is closely

aligned to 'being employed' in the paid labour force, that is being in a contractual master–servant relationship with an organisation or individual who then directs our work in return for some limited material rewards, then social justice will focus on extending the social and material benefits of employment to more people, including the disabled.

However, if we do not accept that this is how the value of one's own life should be defined then we will want to explore strategies that support people being fulfilled in alternative ways and to ensure that when engaged in paid labour we are free to negotiate the most meaningful forms of work. We are at a crossroads and we face a choice between a capitalist or a human conception of life's social value (Lyons 2019).

Interestingly, the DPAC article assumes that UBI should be seen as a subsidy to employers, who can thereby reduce the net costs of employment; whereas many advocates of UBI tend to see it as a guarantee to the potential employee that they will now be able afford to negotiate a better contract of work which is meaningful and dignified, because it is possible to turn down bad work. This hinges on whether the level of UBI is adequate and whether it actually enables people to avoid poverty.

For disabled people there is likely to be a significant tension between two groups:

1. On the one hand there are those who know that, with suitable adaptations and strong legal protections, they and many of their demographic can flourish in paid employment, and that they will benefit from the status and resources it conveys, within the current neoliberal framework.
2. On the other hand some will see those kinds of jobs as neither attractive nor feasible; however, they know that they can make a vital contribution to community life through caring for people, or for the commons, through civic and political action or through artistic endeavour. It is this second group of disabled (and non-disabled) people who may be more attracted to the possibilities created by UBI.

Finally, another critical theme that runs through the DPAC critique is the danger that UBI does not address the urgent needs facing disabled people today. The final section of the DPAC article makes clear a hope that the UK might be on the cusp of a more radical change in direction in policy, ideology and power. They state:

Britain is currently home to the biggest socialist movement in Europe where demands for a living

wage, for health and social care support services free at the point of need and a social security system that provides an adequate standard of living free from conditionality are all popular. These are what we need to fight for, not opening the door to policies that will be used to maintain existing power inequalities, facilitate greater job insecurity and low wages and risk further public service cuts (DPAC 2019: 26).

Of course it might be said, particularly given the extremity of austerity in the UK and the failure to date in overturning the current neoliberal political consensus, that this is simply a different kind of utopianism. However, the matter is important and reflects an important difference between two groups. Advocates of UBI often seem to approach the issue from an academic perspective, outlining models or trying to persuade politicians and policy-makers. Street-level campaigning is growing, but it is very recent. But for disabled people issues of reduced income security, cuts in public services, and loss of employment rights are issues that demand urgent attention today, not further academic study.

Building a New Partnership

If this analysis is broadly accurate then it suggests that it will take significant work and dialogue to connect these two movements. Our view is that this is worth doing for multiple reasons, but it must begin by finding every opportunity to debate these alternative perspectives and to explore whether there might not be practical policy innovations that could create common ground. As one American disabled writer argues:

People with disabilities and those who live, work with, and support them need urgently to educate ourselves about what a basic income is and what it could mean for us. We must begin to take part in the conversation now, to ensure that if a basic income does become a reality, it does so in a way that benefits people with disabilities, rather than leaving them even more vulnerable than they currently are (Harper 2017).

One very obvious area for potential collaboration is in the development of UBI pilots or policy that would enable us to test the idea of UBI+, for there is a good case that such pilots or policy changes to existing disability benefits would be both feasible and potentially liberating (UBI Lab 2019). For many, existing disability benefits could be converted into a form of UBI+ simply by:

- Ending work conditions.
- Ending income-testing and the clawing-back of earnings.

- Ending rules that limit entitlements for people in families.

This is not such an outrageous or utopian idea. For example in the UK, the Disability Living Allowance (DLA) and its replacement, the Personal Independence Payment (PIP), already meet these criteria. Further, as Jennifer Mays explains, blind people in Australia have a pension which is equivalent to an approximate UBI+. This has been highly beneficial in enabling the inclusion of blind Australians in community life (Mays 2016). Reforms of this nature would turn disabled people into trailblazers for UBI and would enable empirical research on the individual and social benefits of a more empowering system.

Secondly, advocates of UBI need to recognise, and communicate clearly, that UBI is not a panacea for solving every social problem nor for meeting every vital need. Every distinct social good has its own distinct properties and logic. For example, healthcare services cannot be organised according to the same principles as UBI, as the need for healthcare varies individually. The same is true for education, housing and many other aspects of our shared community life. We need both universal income and universal public services and there should be no need to choose between them (Duffy 2018b).

Unless advocates of UBI are clear about these caveats, then they cannot expect to ease the fears of persistently disadvantaged groups such as disabled people. Basic income is not, and never can be, a suitable replacement for universal healthcare. Instead, for any meaningful alliance to be built around UBI, it will be essential that all sides are committed to the welfare state as a whole and to extending its emancipatory role. UBI must be seen to play an appropriate role within the whole welfare state, which includes measures to open up opportunities for all and to bar prejudice and discrimination.

In fact this is exactly what mainstream advocates of UBI propose, and no serious advocate of social justice is likely to believe that UBI is an alternative to universal education, healthcare or other vital services (De Wispelaere 2015: 20). Of course, in the wrong hands, any idea can be used badly. For an extreme example, Hitler exploited the idea of a national health service to advance eugenic policies (Office of United States Chief of Counsel For Prosecution of Axis Criminality 1946: 175). But this is not an argument against a national health service, instead it is an argument for ensuring that all such system are democratically accountable and run according to human-rights principles.

Advocacy for basic income needs to be built on a positive and progressive account of the purpose of the welfare state. Currently the welfare state is too often understood

negatively, as merely a form of insurance or as a safety mechanism, to ensure basic needs are met. However, this is not the positive purpose envisioned by advocates of Independent Living nor by many advocates of UBI. In fact advocates of Independent Living have a well-established account of the purpose of the welfare state, which is rooted in the experience of disabled people and their battle for liberation from control and diminished social status.

The key to forging an alliance between the Movement and advocates of basic income may be to examine more deeply the idea of Independent Living. Independent Living is a philosophy which Jenny Morris defines using four principles:

1. All human life is of value.
2. Anyone, whatever their impairment, is capable of exerting choice
3. People who are considered disabled by society reaction to physical, intellectual and sensory impairment and to emotional distress have the right to assert control over their lives.
4. Disabled people have the right to participate fully in society; to take control; and be responsible for the outcome of our action (Morris 1993).

In our view it would benefit the UBI movement to adopt this vision and to see the fight for UBI as part of an effort to build an emancipatory welfare state. It is not enough to think in terms of meeting needs, instead we need to see the purpose of the welfare state as being to empower potential.

The possibility of connecting these different progressive quests – to achieve UBI and to ensure collective empowerment – depends on rethinking some of our assumptions about how the economy functions and what counts as a socially valuable contribution. The capitalist version of social value – use by others for financial reward – seems unlikely to be the basis for the liberation or emancipation for anyone, and particularly for many disabled people. Building a society of equals requires establishing a conception of citizenship which is inclusive and within which everyone's unique gifts can flourish, and where money and power are not used to determine human worth (Duffy 2016b: 27).

Australia is in an interesting position to work on the relationship between UBI and the rights of disabled people. The development of the *Every Australian Counts* campaign was an important national innovation where disabled people and families worked with professional

groups to define a new universalist vision for disability rights (Galbally 2016). Campaigners successfully engaged the general public by enabling them to see that disability rights were not separate rights for separate people, but instead they were part of a universal system of social security for all.

There remain enormous challenges to turn the aspirations of this campaign into meaningful reforms. There is no doubt that the progress made thus far has been significant and, most importantly, that the ongoing pressure exerted by disabled people and families has kept human rights at the forefront of public debate.

The battle for UBI (and UBI+) would benefit from similar attention to the *Every Australian Counts* campaign to developing a wider public understanding of the core ideas, the social choices ahead, and the many different groups that might benefit. But the battle for Independent Living in Australia (and elsewhere) may also benefit from converting the individualised funding that is currently being deployed by complex bureaucratic systems (like the The National Disability Insurance Agency) into a genuine entitlement and the rightful property of disabled people themselves (Duffy, 2013).

Conclusion

UBI is a technical and political system for redistributing money directly to citizens. There are many good reasons to believe that such a system could have many positive impacts in terms of advancing human rights and reducing inequality. However, it is how it is implemented, and the beliefs and practices of those who implement it that will determine what it will actually achieve. Any system can be used well, or badly; and it is unwise to have faith in any technical and political system, purely as an end in itself.

Independent Living does not just require technological and political change, it is also a philosophy of emancipation and equality. Disabled people, based on their lived experience of resisting oppression, have developed insights into the purpose and meaning of life. They realise that every human being has value and can live a life of meaning, if they have the freedom, resources and support to make this possible.

Advocates of UBI would be wise to pay attention to the fears and hopes of disabled people, because disabled people tend to be much more aware of the importance and the perils of the welfare state. Advocates of UBI would be wise to adopt the goal of Independent Living as their own goal and to think clearly how UBI would need to function in practice so that it supports the rights and inclusion of all disabled people. If they do not, then they cannot

expect the support of disabled people in advocating for UBI. Advocates of UBI need to pay more attention to the question of how UBI is understood and implemented unless they are happy to see UBI exploited by those who do not share their commitment to social justice.

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End Notes

1. Disabled people is the preferred political terminology in the United Kingdom for the disability social movement. For Australia, the terminology adopted is people first – that is people with disabilities. Despite differences in terminology, both the UK and Australia employ 'disability' from a critical activist standpoint to highlight the oppression, injustice and structural inequities experienced by people with disabilities throughout history and in modern times.

Authors

Simon Duffy (Centre for Welfare Reform - simon@centreforwelfarereform.org). Simon is a philosopher and social innovator who works to improve the welfare state. He is a regular public speaker, consultant and international government policy advisor. Simon is Director of The Centre for Welfare Reform, an independent think tank and research centre, which he founded in 2009. The Centre shares and develops social innovations to promote human rights and equal citizenship for all. He is also Secretary to the international cooperative Citizen Network which works to advance citizenship for all. In 1996 Simon founded Inclusion Glasgow to provide radically individualised support to people with complex disabilities. He went on to help create a series of new organisations in Scotland and England to promote equality and inclusion. He has led thinking on self-directed support and individual budgets and from 2003 to 2009 he was CEO of 'In Control'.

This work led to a profound shift in the organisation of social care in England. He lives in Sheffield and is co-founder of UBI Lab Sheffield that works to advance basic income. Simon has a doctorate in moral philosophy and writes on the welfare state, citizenship, social justice and inclusion. Key publications include *Unlocking the Imagination* (1996), *Keys to Citizenship* (2003) *Women at the Centre* (2011) *A Fair Income* (2011) *Peer Power* (2012) and *The Unmaking of Man* (2013). Simon is also a regular contributor to the Huffington Post. His awards include the RSA's Prince Albert Medal and the Social Policy Association Award for outstanding contribution to social policy.

James Elder-Woodward (Centre for Welfare Reform - jim.elderwoodward@gmail.com). Born with cerebral palsy, James Elder-Woodward has had life-long experience of disability, not only as a health and social service user, but also as a service provider, planner and researcher. He has worked for central government, local authorities, the health service, the voluntary sector and universities. He was one of the founders of the Glasgow Centre for Independent Living, the first centre in Scotland. He has been chair of the Scottish Independent Living Coalition, Executive Advisory Committee of the Independent Living Project, Co-Chair of the Scottish Government's Independent Living Partnership Board, Convener of the Glasgow Centre for Inclusive Living, Strategic Board member of the Institute for Research and Innovation in Social Services, Board Trustee of Capability Scotland and chair of the Scottish Committee of the Campaign for a Fair Society. He is also a Fellow of the Centre for Welfare Reform. He has written a number of articles and papers on disability and independent living, including co-authoring a book for social care workers *Social Work in a Changing Scotland* (2018) For his lifelong work to promote the rights of disabled people Jim was awarded an OBE in 2012, and in 2015 he was given an Honorary Doctorate by the University of Glasgow.

story

Thrown down & then a random
settling to toe poke a pattern

& make some sense from this distance
as if memory caught could now

order the photographs
by date, place & who

your death notice
is about as solid as it gets

RORY HARRIS,
LARGS BAY, SA.

A few wise men

They told him off, as he smeared
the sky with two-and-a-half strokes
of a cheerful rainbow.

Curious, he looked deep into the night sky, and
wondered what lay on the other side.
Only to be scolded, yet again.
Speculating about the heavens, is blasphemous,
he was reminded. Then,

before he slept that night,
they snatched his lullaby, and handed
him a prayer. You should know this 'God',
'your' God, 'our' God - they instructed him sternly.

That night, though,
someone else's 'God' turned hostile.
The little kid, woken up by gunfire that
wouldn't relent,
called upon 'his' God. The night, however, belonged

to the hostile 'God' that echoed through the streets,
silencing all prayers hurled at any 'other' Gods.
The night orphaned him, and
the dawn that followed, was bereft of mercy.
He held no choice, he was told. Neither for a lullaby,
or a prayer.

So who decides my future, he queried.
A few wise old men, they said, as they transported
him to a new land. You will be safe there, they
assured him. At nightfall, as he held down the
window blinds with his fingers, and looked out,
the night sky was lush with stars, as always,

yet it held no allure for him. Deprived
of a 'God' and a 'lullaby', he had been crowned a 'refugee'.
They never addressed him as a 'kid' from that day.
He was 'foreign policy'.

SANAM SHARMA,
MELBOURNE, VIC.

Public Equity, Basic Income and Democracy: A case of political arithmetic

KEITH RANKIN

A basic income is a universal property right, based on sound liberal democratic principles. Using water as metaphor for the public domain, everyone owns water, and everyone should therefore profit from the productive use of water and other public domain inputs.

Good public policy is informed by good accounting. Through simple processes of adaptive public book keeping and inexpensive accounting informed policy development, any country can replace income tax with a charge on public domain resources; and can pay its economic citizens a public equity dividend from the proceeds. For most people – in New Zealand at least – the only immediate change would be in the labelling of their present income sources. The most important change would be an extension of democratic rights, and the future opportunities that come with enhanced democracy.

Introduction: Political Arithmetic

Historian James Joll talked of an era's 'unspoken assumptions' – the sorts of things people didn't say, just because they were so taken for granted (Margaret Macmillan 2016: 7).

Political Arithmetic (Petty 1691) is the first – and still the best – name given to national accounting. As in much more recent developments in national accounting such as those of the 1930s and 1940s (Gleeson White 2011: 180), Petty's overt purpose was highly practical – to establish the size of the tax base (Gleeson-White 2014: 15). *Public finance* was reshaped by the scientific and political revolutions of the late seventeenth century, to which Petty's contribution belonged.

Sixteen-eighty-eight was a very important year in the initiation of political democracy – the year of England's 'Glorious Revolution' representing the beginning of the end of absolute monarchy. The 1690s also saw the birth of economic liberalism, especially through the writings of John Locke, who was indeed one of the glorious revolutionaries.¹ While the long term result was the formation of our present liberal democratic states, there is an inherent problem: the foundation principle of economic liberalism is not democracy; rather it is *private property rights*. To complete the full transition to liberal democracy, an important step has yet to be taken: a development of *public property rights* that complements the system of private property rather than undermining it (as in the 'communist' revolutions of the twentieth century).

More than most scientific projects, political arithmetic remains inherently political. Its conceptual framework evolves much more slowly than does the growth of information collected under its auspices. This slow pace is not necessarily due to individual or class self interest; rather it is a case of mental inertia. Once people become sufficiently invested in perceiving things – such as income taxation – in a particular way, we find it too hard to reorganise our thinking; too hard to see truths concealed by prevailing constructs. Unspoken assumptions are taken for granted.

In the twentieth century, the huge gains of *labour* productivity – the displacement of labour by capital – diminished the importance of the labour market as the central conduit for the distribution of income. Equitable distribution of income arising from the preponderance of *capital* has become the central issue of our age – yet due to our inertia we still look to the labour market for solutions. Arguably – but almost certainly true – the majority of our productive capital is collective public capital. Such capital is not subject to exclusive ownership. Income returns to public capital should be distributed democratically within each country.

Political democracy was fulfilled with the principle of *one adult, one public vote*. The equal distribution of *public income* represents a final major step in the fulfilment of democracy. Economic democracy requires a political arithmetic that can deliver *one adult, one public dividend*. One important label given to such an unconditional and

universal payment has been Universal Basic Income (UBI)²

In the Universal Basic Income

The system I am proposing seeks to enhance the freedom of all individuals – in the sense intended by the [New Zealand] Royal Commission on Social Policy – while fully maintaining the marketplace as a means of allocating resources. It is based on a universal tax credit available to every adult – the universal basic income (UBI) – and a moderately high flat tax rate (Rankin 1991: 5).

Academic and popular discussion tends to see Universal Basic Income (UBI) as one of two things. Either it is a fully universal cash *transfer* payable to residentially qualified recipients grafted onto an existing taxation transfer regime, posing a subsequent challenge to find ways (new taxes or increases in existing taxes) to pay for it (Standing 2017: Chapter 7). Or it is a universal income – for example a *refundable tax credit* (Atkinson 1995: 3) – payable to all adult residents or citizens, *replacing* existing transfer benefits.³

The public discussion of UBI – as a solution to a range of problems – has been largely etched onto twentieth-century assumptions around property rights and social policy.⁴ Its direct engagement with the disciplines of economics and public finance – each with their own embedded assumptions – is minimal. It should not be like that; UBI represents a challenge to time worn axioms, and an enrichment to economics. While the necessary discussion is not technically challenging, it does require the application of imagination to hidebound public accounting structures.

In 1991, when I opted for the new name *universal basic income* – over other names then in circulation – I explicitly coupled a proposed benefit (a ‘universal basic income’) with a simple principled tax (a ‘moderately high flat tax rate’).⁵ It is the *flat* concept that’s important here. The ‘basic income flat tax’ construct is the essential contrast from the well worn arithmetic of ‘conditional benefit graduated tax’ (Atkinson 1995: 2 4).

In 1996, in the BIEN paper that appears to have injected the name Universal Basic Income into the wider global discussion, I stated:

A full universal basic income (UBI) is an adequate social dividend, equivalent to at least an unemployment benefit, whereas a partial basic income is a social dividend that must be supplemented by an income support ‘transfer’ (Rankin 1996: 1).

I then suggested that appropriate reforms to public finance could ‘make an adequate universal basic income into a politically feasible objective’ (Rankin 1996: 7). This emphasis on the *adequacy* (or sufficiency) of a single benefit comes through in Van Parijs’s subsequent exposition of UBI:

Entering the new millennium, I submit for discussion a proposal for the improvement of the human condition: namely, that everyone should be paid a universal basic income (UBI), at a level sufficient for subsistence ... Productivity, wealth, and national incomes have advanced sufficiently far to support an adequate UBI (Van Parijs 2000).

In my later writing I have de-emphasised the word ‘adequate’, placing emphasis on the practical reimagination of existing income taxation and distribution. I have sought to encourage policy accountants to extend capitalist and democratic principles of equity into their discipline. In doing so, my analyses came to emphasise the concept of *public equity*, and how easy it can be to attribute a *public equity dividend* (unconstrained by adequacy requirements) through a reconceptualisation of prevailing graduated income tax scales. This approach contrasts with the usual presumption that a UBI can coexist with graduated income tax. Standing (2017) does not address the ‘flat tax’ versus ‘graduated tax’ issue. He assumes a graduated income tax in addition to a BI. However, he does note (2017: 133) that reducing ‘tax allowances’ in the United Kingdom and United States (which flatten the tax scale) would be sensible, noting also that one’s perception of being a taxpayer motivates democratic participation. A sense of contributing as well as receiving gives a person ‘skin in the game’ (Taleb 2017).

De-emphasis of adequacy is not a claim that income adequacy is unimportant; rather it is a recognition that a UBI, of itself, cannot be expected to carry this burden. A universal benefit is the essential *necessary* requirement of economic democracy, and a platform for adequate income support. By contrast, an expensive overly stated *sufficient* benefit is an easy ‘straw man’ for lazy critics to shoot down (Such as Jason Furman, cited in Standing 2017: 82, 84. Furman was Chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers under US President Barack Obama).

An adequate UBI – meaning a fully universal benefit high enough to displace all transfer benefits – should be possible in a future automated ultra high productivity economy. Such an economy can probably never become a reality, however, unless enabled by the *prior* realisation of *public equity dividends*. With public dividend distribution, we can become more relaxed about robots.

The accounting route to a Universal Basic Income requires little more from policymakers and the policy interested public than a willingness to look at present realities through an alternative lens. It starts by accounting for public revenues and outlays in a new way – based on capitalist *and* democratic principles – that can be published alongside traditional ways of presenting the public .

Public Equity

Our destruction of nature is in part due to our failure to distinguish between public benefits and private profits – and that private profits take precedence over public benefits because the latter are not priced (Gleeson-White 2014: 28).

There are three distinct approaches to the guaranteed provision of a basic income: an adequate universal basic income (requiring more taxes rather than tax reform), a refundable tax credit (replacing conditional transfer benefits) or, a distributive public equity dividend (as an expression of democratic capitalism). The first concept is politically difficult to fund. The second concept does not recognise the special circumstances of many people. The third concept is easy to fund, but difficult to imagine. Standing (2017: 28) addresses this issue of equity, while continuing to argue that the rich should contribute disproportionately. The democratic way is to contribute to the public pool proportionately, and to draw from that pool equally.

While public or collective equity is a universal concept, revealed through various attempts by polities to compensate for the injustices of liberal capitalism, it is also a concept trapped in the academic and bureaucratic shadows – a concept without a name in any textbook. Economic immigrants understand the concept, implicitly. They appreciate that, by virtue of economic citizenship in an advanced economy, employed *and* unemployed persons have a right to higher living standards than their counterparts in a developing economy.

The essence of public equity can be illustrated in an on off debate in New Zealand this decade, around the question ‘Who owns water?’⁶ As a result of the question being asked in 2012, the Prime Minister (John Key) found himself obliged to say that ‘nobody owns water’ (Rankin 2013).⁷ By 2017 – when the water bottling industry took central stage in the New Zealand election campaign – the more plausible democratic consensus was that ‘everybody owns water’.

The implications of this shift – from ‘nobody’ (liberal principle) to ‘everybody’ (democratic principle) – were not

teased out in the election campaign, nor subsequently. There are two immediate impediments. First, is the concern that one group of New Zealanders – indigenous Māori – may claim more equity in water than other New Zealanders. It was Māori interest in water that precipitated the water ownership debate in New Zealand. The second is that the logic of charging users – such as water bottling firms – for the water they use should be equally applied to other intensive users of water, such as politically powerful dairy farmers.

One particular contribution to the water debate – simultaneously unhelpful and helpful – was made by one Ngāpuhi (a spokesperson for a *hapu* of New Zealand’s largest indigenous *iwi*) (*New Zealand Herald* 2012; *National Business Review* 2012). He suggested that what applies to water also applies to air (or wind). For many, this was one worm too many from the ‘can of worms’ opened by the water question. While a water rent could be conceived of by many, an air rent could not. And what might be next?

The more helpful tack – helpful as a means of progressing the discussion – would have been to accept that everybody collectively owns perhaps half of *all* the assets (tangible and intangible) that contribute to gross domestic product (GDP). In this sense we can understand that there are two *hemispheres* or *domains* of proprietorship, one private and one public. Private rights are *exclusive*, such as the right to enclose land, and to capture the yield from such land as private income. Public resources are the *commons*, our *environments*.

Water is an environmental resource – a capital resource – located in the *public domain*. The public domain contains many capital resources – natural infrastructure, physical infrastructure, scientific and technological knowledge, social and institutional capital – which can be treated as one public resource pool.⁸ In this essay, water becomes a metaphor for the entire public domain. *Income tax can be understood as a single price for all public domain inputs.*⁹ To acknowledge and charge for collective resources does not necessarily require higher levels of income taxation than presently exist. By pooling all collective capital into a single conceptual domain, there is no need for bureaucrats to price public resources by calculating their average or marginal costs.

Perhaps half of economic income is generated by capital subject to public stewardship.¹⁰ The economic contribution of public capital can never be measured precisely; nor should it be.

Nevertheless, *returns to public capital* are substantial; and can both be distributed by government and withheld by

government, just as private profits are partly distributed to shareholders and partly retained as business reserves.

Public capital is 'public equity', a 'public property right'. Traditional public financial accounting – which follows *path-dependent* presumptions¹¹ – conceals rather than reveals how (and to whom) public profit is distributed. The principles of distributing public capital income need be little different from those pertaining to the distribution of private capital income. A proportion of the income returns to public capital must be retained by governments for their own expenditure on collective goods and services. In addition, there should be a *patrimony*, as Simon (2000) labelled it. Governments – analogous to boards of directors – control the distribution of public capital income.

It's to twentieth century tax accounting that we now turn: gross income; disposable income, income taxes, tax brackets, tax exemptions; subsidies. By applying democratic accounting principles to countries' graduated income tax scales, it is possible to identify a form of patrimony – a public equity dividend – and a hidden clawback tax that applies to low income recipients. The political means to achieving a Universal Basic Income is the removal of this unprincipled hidden tax.

Income Tax Accounting

The present fiscal regime can be easily reinterpreted as a basic income system by accounting for the existing income tax scale as if it was proportional (ie 'flat') (Rankin 1997: 55).

We take it for granted that income tax is an arbitrary percentage of a person's (or a company's) private income that is appropriated by government. The one principle we adhere to is that of *progression*; that people with higher gross incomes should pay income tax at a higher average rate. The public also has political expectations that 'progressive' governments favour higher tax rates on average compared to 'conservative' governments; and that the former accentuate the principle of progression. Further, we generally understand that the mechanism for progression is *graduation*, the impost of higher marginal rates of income tax on higher incomes through a process of setting higher *marginal* rates for higher income brackets. Thus, for persons earning NZ\$60,000 in a year, then the percentage marginal rate of 30% is the reduction of income tax payable if such a person's income decreases by NZ\$100 to \$59,900 (eg NZ\$30 liability reduction).

Many (probably most) economists, who emphasise the personal marginal rate as a determinant of economic

behaviour, approach income tax with two normative assumptions:

- The 'liberal' assumption: that all income earned is inherently private; hence, while there may be public capital, there is no such thing as public capital income. This is the normative view that nobody owns public capital and therefore no income accrues to public capital.
- The 'all growth is good' assumption: economic success depends, in part, on the amount of labour supplied to the market economy; there being a direct and inverse relationship from marginal tax rates to labour supply, and that more labour supplied is better than less labour.

In relation to the second point, the corollary is that income tax is inefficient – acting as a deadweight cost on the economy. The orthodox challenge is to design fiscal policies that minimise this supposed inefficiency. Further, company tax – a component of income tax – is likewise understood as inefficient, both as a disincentive to produce at the margin and a cost of production that may compromise the international competitiveness of a country's businesses.

To develop an alternative set of principles around income, it is pertinent to go back to the origins of political arithmetic and income tax. In classical economics, wage rates were set in the long run at a market rate that represented the subsistence of workers. Because workers could not subsist on less than they were already receiving, any taxes on wages therefore would be fully incurred by capital (employers) and not labour (employees).¹³

So, income taxes were exempted on lower (wage like) incomes. In practice, it meant a single rate of income tax, with the first £x or \$x of any person's gross income being exempted from tax.¹² An example of such a tax scale would be to set a tax rate of 25% with a NZ\$50,000 exemption. Table 1 on the next page presents four examples of graduated tax scales. The first case is the simplest imaginable, a single rate of tax with an exemption. The other three represent current scales of actual counties.¹³

Table 1: Examples of traditional Graduated Income Tax Scales

Case 1: simple		Case 2: New Zealand		Case 3: United Kingdom		Case 4: Australia	
income brackets (\$)	marginal rate (%)	income brackets (NZ\$)	marginal rate (%)	income brackets (UK£)	marginal rate (%)	income brackets (A\$)	marginal rate (%)
0 to 50,000	00.0%	0 to 14,000	10.5%	0 to 11,850	00.0%	0 to 18,200	00.0%
over 50,000	25.0%	14,001 to 48,000	17.5%	11,851 to 46,350	20.0%	18,201 to 37,000	19.0%
		48,001 to 70,000	30.0%	46,351 to 150,000	40.0%	37,001 to 87,000	32.5%
		over 70,000	33.0%	over 150,000	45.0%	87,001 to 180,000	37.0%
						over 180,000	45.0%

sources: New Zealand IRD, gov.uk/income-tax, Australian ATO

The simple case represents a progressive income tax scale, with two income brackets (in NZ dollars) (\$0 to \$50,000; over \$50,000) and two graduations of marginal tax (0%, 25%). For persons earning above \$50,000 per year, average tax rates would be above zero, and would rise with income. For example, a person earning \$100,000 per year would face an average tax rate of 12.5% (\$12,500 tax) and a person earning \$200,000 per year would face an average tax rate of 18.75% (\$37,500 tax).

Moving now to the *alternative interpretation* of the same scale, based on the principle of charging a price (flat levy of 25%) for public domain inputs. In this case, it makes no sense to call the relief to low earnings an 'exemption'; it would be like exempting employers from paying some rent to their landlords. Rather, we understand the zero

percent rate as a concession that creates a *cumulative benefit*. It is cumulative in the sense that, as a person's market income increases from NZ\$0 to \$50,000, the benefit becomes incrementally larger.¹⁴ We may call this middle class benefit a graduation benefit (a quantification of the benefit implicit in the tax graduation process).¹⁵

In Table 2 this 'graduation benefit' is labelled *unconditional benefit*. Table 2 shows three ways of deriving the same *available income* from *gross earnings*.¹⁶ As the table shows, not everyone receives the same 'unconditional benefit', so it is not a form of universal basic income.

Table 2: Conversion of Graduated Income Tax Scale: Simple case with flat levy of 25%

\$	gross earnings						
	0	10,000	30,000	50,000	100,000	150,000	200,000
graduated income tax:	0	0	0	0	-12,500	-25,000	-37,500
unconditional benefit:	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
alternative (flat levy):	0	-2,500	-7,500	-12,500	-25,000	-37,500	-50,000
unconditional benefit:	0	2,500	7,500	12,500	12,500	12,500	12,500
democratic (flat levy):	0	-2,500	-7,500	-12,500	-25,000	-37,500	-50,000
public equity dividend:	12,500	12,500	12,500	12,500	12,500	12,500	12,500
clawback tax:	-12,500	-10,000	-5,000	0	0	0	0
available income (\$000)	0	10,000	30,000	50,000	87,500	125,000	162,500

In our simple case using alternative accounting, gross earners of NZ\$50,000 would be levied at 25% (NZ\$12,500) rather than exempt, but would still receive NZ\$50,000 of available income. The exemption would be relabelled as an unconditional benefit of NZ\$12,500, in this case exactly offsetting the NZ \$12,500 tax levy paid. *Market earnings* (\$37,500 after tax) would be augmented

by an unconditional benefit of NZ \$12,500. Available income would be a mix of market sourced (NZ\$37,500) and publicly sourced (NZ\$12,500) income. Persons grossing NZ\$200,000 would get the same unconditional NZ\$12,500 'graduation benefit', as would persons grossing NZ\$50,000.

Alternative accounting gives the following, for *persons grossing NZ\$50,000 or more*:

Available Income = 75% of Gross Income, plus Unconditional Benefit (NZ\$12,500)

Consider, however, (in NZ currency) gross earners of \$30,000. Such persons receive a total of \$30,000 of available income. They each incur a tax levy of \$7,500 (25% of \$30,000) while receiving an unconditional benefit of just \$7,500. They do not earn enough to accumulate the maximum benefit of \$12,500.

Using the first approach (liberal principle, *nobody owns 'water'*), the exemption is presented as the government doing low income earners a favour, by charging them no income tax. However, using the alternative approach (pricing the public domain; *everybody owns 'water'*) then persons earning just NZ\$30,000 per year are short changed, receiving lesser unconditional benefits despite the democratic presumption that all citizens have an equal stake in public life. Through the liberal accounting convention that nobody owns public capital – that there is no such thing as public equity – low income recipients miss out on publicly sourced benefits payable unconditionally to others. This is an undemocratic outcome.

Turning to the democratic approach, we can attribute the same unconditional 'graduation benefit' to high and low earners alike. This unconditional benefit is now accounted as a universal income, a 'public equity dividend'. However, in order to get the same available income (as we must in a purely accounting exercise), we clawback a portion of that dividend from low earners. We may call this a *low-income clawback tax*; a tax that becomes apparent when applying democratic accounting to the simple case, or any other case.

Reform: Policy Informed by Democratic Accounting

Can accountants save the planet? (Preface to Jane Gleeson-White 2014, *Six Capitals*).

Principled accounting informs principled policy. There is no justification for regressive low income taxes. Thus, the priority of any government considering tax reductions should be to remove any such taxes. Removing them – placing zeroes in the Table 2 'clawback tax' line – ensures everyone receives the same unconditional benefit of NZ\$12,500, *raising available income* for low- or zero income persons by *up to* NZ\$12,500.

Many low income people are already compensated for low income taxes through transfer benefits targeted at helping the poor. For existing beneficiaries without market income,

such policy reform would convert NZ\$12,500 of existing benefits into unconditional (public equity) dividends. This NZ\$12,500 would be understood as normal income, not as 'help'.

The policy outcome would become, for *all* economic citizens (rather than for 'some'):

Available Income = 75% of Gross Income, plus Public Equity Dividend (NZ\$12,500)

The Public Equity Dividend is what many would call a Universal Basic Income. We derived this, practically, by accounting for returns to public capital when a price is paid to the proprietors of public capital. We did not try to quantify the exact amount of public capital income; rather we settled on an example price (25%) that was equivalent to a flat income tax of 25%.

After a policy removal of clawback taxes, only people receiving help (benefits over and above the public equity dividend) need be called 'beneficiaries'. All non beneficiaries would face a 25% marginal tax rate, relative to gross market earnings. While beneficiaries would face a higher effective marginal tax rate – as under liberal accounting – fewer people would be beneficiaries.

The optimum tax rate in real world liberal democracies is much more than 25%, evidenced by the present preponderance of marginal tax rates in the 30-40% range faced by workers on above average wages. Modern countries require much revenue for the purchase of collective goods such as education, health care, and defence.

Actual-Country income tax examples

New Zealanders tend to be most comfortable with modest benefits that are the same for all, with uncomplicated supplementary assistance for those who need more (Rankin 2016: 67).

In the world today, all countries have more complex income tax scales than the simple example shown in Table 2. But some countries' scales are not very much more complex. Although New Zealand has a four bracket scale (Table 1), alternative and democratic accounting is applicable (Table 3).

Table 3: Examples of Graduated Income Tax Scales: New Zealand with flat levy of 33%

\$	gross earnings						
	0	10,000	30,000	50,000	100,000	150,000	200,000
graduated income tax:	0	-1,050	-4,270	-8,020	-23,920	-40,420	-56,920
unconditional benefit:	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
alternative (flat levy):	0	-3,300	-9,900	-16,500	-33,000	-49,500	-66,000
unconditional benefit:	0	2,250	5,630	8,480	9,080	9,080	9,080
democratic (flat levy):	0	-3,300	-9,900	-16,500	-33,000	-49,500	-66,000
public equity dividend:	9,080	9,080	9,080	9,080	9,080	9,080	9,080
clawback tax:	-9,080	-6,830	-3,450	-600	0	0	0
available income (\$000)	0	8,950	25,730	41,980	76,080	109,580	143,080

source: <https://www.ird.govt.nz/how-to/taxrates-codes/rates/>

Abatements to unconditional benefits occur when a person's annual gross income (in NZ currency) falls below \$70,000. A person with \$69,000 of gross earnings receives an unconditional benefit of \$9,050; \$30 less than a person grossing \$70,000. The 30% rate represents a benefit decrement of \$30 for every reduction of \$1,000 of gross earnings for persons earning between than \$49,000 and \$70,000.¹⁷ The 10.5% rate represents a loss of benefit of \$225 for every reduction of \$1,000 of gross earnings.¹⁸

For New Zealand, for everyone grossing more than NZ\$70,000:

Spendable Income = 67% of Gross Income, plus Unconditional Benefit (NZ\$9,080)

If the low income clawback taxes were to be removed then, for every *economic citizen*.¹⁹

Spendable Income = 67% of Gross Income, plus Public Equity Dividend (\$9,080)

This would be equivalent to a universal Basic Income of NZ\$9,080 coupled with a 33% tax rate.

The fiscal cost of the policy is the cost of removing the clawback tax.

Based on reformed ('everybody owns') accounting principles, all of GDP would be 'taxed' at 33%. Existing tax breaks would be relabelled 'subsidies' or 'benefits'. For example, New Zealand has a reduced statutory company tax rate of 28%. Under alternative accounting principles, New Zealand businesses receive a subsidy equal to 5% (33%-28%) of their taxable profits. Whether such a subsidy is 'good' or 'bad' is outside the scope of this essay. Reformed accounting simply suggests that the 28% tax rate is more correctly accounted for as a 5% subsidy.

The total size of the public hemisphere of New Zealand's capitalist economy is not defined by the 33% tax rate.

Public revenues are also levied through indirect taxes, especially a 15% goods and services tax (GST/VAT). Further, some New Zealand businesses are fully or partly government owned; their profits contribute to the *public equity fund* (Rankin 2017), which is gross public revenue using alternative accounting.

As in the simple illustrative case (Table 2), informed consequential policy would be to remove regressive clawback taxes as a priority over any other form of tax reduction.

The numbers above (for New Zealand, Table 3) are not necessarily optimal. It would not be difficult to present an argument for a higher levy than 33% and a higher dividend than \$9,080. In particular, since 1985, real wage rates have barely increased, despite increases in labour productivity. An annual public equity dividend of between \$10,000 and \$15,000 might more realistically incorporate foregone productivity dividends. These are questions that can be publicly debated with ease, once alternative (*everybody owns*) accounting systems are in place to inform that debate.

Once achieved, as economic productivity continues to increase, then increases in the tax rate (flat levy) and in the Public Equity Dividend would be required to avert future increases in income inequality. Productivity becomes, as it should be, a source of higher living standards and not a driver of inequality (Rankin 2011: 69).

Most other countries have more complex income tax regimes, either because they are federations, or because complexification over time has outstripped simplification. I will present two more relatively simple examples: United Kingdom and Australia.²⁰

Table 4: Examples of Graduated Income Tax Scales: United Kingdom, flat levy of 40%

£	gross earnings						
	0	10,000	30,000	50,000	100,000	150,000	200,000
graduated income tax:	0	0	-3,630	-8,360	-28,360	-48,360	-70,860
unconditional benefit:	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
alternative (flat levy):	0	-4,000	-12,000	-20,000	-40,000	-60,000	-80,000
unconditional benefit:	0	4,000	8,370	11,640	11,640	11,640	9,140
democratic (flat levy):	0	-4,000	-12,000	-20,000	-40,000	-60,000	-80,000
public equity dividend:	11,640	11,640	11,640	11,640	11,640	11,640	11,640
clawback tax:	-11,640	-7,640	-3,270	0	0	0	-2,500
available income (\$000)	0	10,000	26,370	41,640	71,640	101,640	129,140

source: <https://www.gov.uk/income-tax-rates>

In the United Kingdom case (Table 4), there is a high income clawback tax as well as a low income clawback.²¹ Democratic principles favour the abolition of all clawbacks; dividend clawbacks are like clawing back the democratic right to vote. Prioritisation however favours the abolition of low income surcharges first.

For United Kingdom, for everyone earning more than £46,000 and less than £150,000:

Spendable Income = 60% of Gross Income, plus Unconditional Benefit (£11,640)

If the clawback taxes were to be removed then, for every economic citizen:

Spendable Income = 60% of Gross Income, plus Public Equity Dividend (£11,640)

These may be above optimal settings. A public equity dividend of £11,600 is more than twice that of New Zealand's (Table 3), given the \$NZ to £UK exchange rate. (GDP per person is similar, about \$US40,000 in both United Kingdom and New Zealand.) While the fiscal cost of removing clawback taxes incurred by people grossing less than £46,350 would be substantially higher than the costs for New Zealand, this cost should be manageable over a few years (as an alternative to conventional tax cuts), given that there would be no fiscal cost associated with relabelling the benefits of those already receiving £11,600 or more annually in allowance and transfer benefits.

There may also be an argument in the United Kingdom that many people might regard an unconditional dividend

of £11,600 (£223 per week) as an incentive to not seek paid work. (This argument cannot be applied to the much lower New Zealand amount.) A good test of this argument is in New Zealand, where all persons aged over 65 (with residential qualifications) receive an unconditional public pension (universal at about \$250 per week; most people get more). This actually encourages older people to remain in work, because the universal nature of the payment means that seniors do not lose public benefits when participating in the market economy. Many people over 65 choose to negotiate employment arrangements involving below average weekly hours; it's a win win for employers and older employees alike. There is no evidence that a higher universal payment would cause these employees to cease paid work, or even to reduce their hours. New Zealand's 'UBI for seniors' represents an important case study of the labour market impact of a universal benefit.

The Australian example is presented in Table 5.²²

Table 5: Examples of Graduated Income Tax Scales: Australia (2018/19), flat levy of 37%

\$	gross earnings						
	0	10,000	30,000	50,000	100,000	150,000	200,000
graduated income tax:	0	0	-2,242	-7,797	-24,632	-43,132	-63,232
unconditional benefit:	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
alternative (flat levy):	0	-3,700	-11,100	-18,500	-37,000	-55,500	-74,000
unconditional benefit:	0	3,700	8,858	10,703	12,368	12,368	10,768
democratic (flat levy):	0	-3,700	-11,100	-18,500	-37,000	-55,500	-74,000
public equity dividend:	12,368	12,368	12,368	12,368	12,368	12,368	12,368
clawback tax:	-12,368	-8,668	-3,510	-1,665	0	0	-1,600
available income (\$000)	0	10,000	27,758	42,203	75,368	106,868	136,768

source: <https://www.ato.gov.au/rates/individual-income-tax-rates>

For Australia, for everyone earning more than A\$87,000 and less than \$180,000:

Spendable Income = 63% of Gross Income, plus Unconditional Benefit (A\$12,368)

If the clawback taxes were to be removed then, for every economic citizen:

Spendable Income = 63% of Gross Income, plus Public Equity Dividend (A\$12,368)

This last couplet – 37% public domain levy, A\$12,368 (\$237 weekly) public equity dividend – looks close to an optimal ‘Goldilocks’ policy setting (neither too high nor too low). Any critique of such a policy choice must either disagree with the removal of clawback taxes (eg on grounds of fiscal cost or on grounds of labour supply effects). These taxes are real; visible through improved book keeping. Low income clawbacks contribute to precarity, poverty, and aversion to risk taking.

Final Reflection

A portion of the product of a society should be shared by all of those who inhabit that society. To establish such a patrimony is equivalent to recognizing shared ownership of a significant fraction of the resources, physical and intellectual, that enable the society to produce what it produces (Simon 2000).

If any readers are unconvinced by the argument that income tax should be understood as the price producers pay for public domain inputs, and that a dividend should

be paid as a return to the proprietors of the public domain (that everyone owns), then consider the following. What is the harm of making the first NZ\$12,000 (say) of beneficiaries’ existing benefits unconditional? And of allowing a small boost to the available incomes of low wage workers and the precariously self employed? If the only harm is a modest fiscal cost, then the benefits must surely outweigh these costs. If any critics should believe that an unconditional benefit of A\$12,368 in Australia would make many Australians too lazy to engage with the marketplace, then they should offer some evidence. New Zealand evidence (for example, from Statistics New Zealand’s *Household Labour Force Survey*) for people aged over 65 suggests that a Universal Basic Income facilitates rather than inhibits labour supply. It is present rules that disengage beneficiaries from both market activity and effective citizenship; we punish them by cancelling their existing security when they make appropriate but risky life choices.

A reformed public accounting methodology reveals one central cause of poverty; regressive low income taxes. Such accounting reform ‘opens the door’ – the adjacent possible²³ – to an inexpensive reform that is obvious once graduated taxes are reimagined; a reform that gives low middle income earners a little more cash and a lot less precarity. Existing beneficiaries can benefit from a substantial part of their available income becoming universal and unconditional.

Is such a policy reform enough to eradicate poverty and excessive precarity? No. But it is a necessary start. Accounting reform can help us to save our public environments by giving us all an equity stake in them. We all then have ‘skin in the game’, as proprietorial citizens rather than labouring denizens.²⁴

A *public equity dividend* is a practical citizens' income; a universal basic income that is the economic equivalent of the political franchise. One adult, one vote; one adult, one dividend. Public equity represents the arithmetic of economic democracy.

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End Notes

1. Locke was a prominent expositor of 'Lord Shaftesbury's principles' (Milton 2000: 47). See Martin (2013: Chapter 8), reviewed in Rankin (2014), for a discussion about Locke's importance in establishing the liberal way of thinking about money and public finance.
2. Other familiar labels for similar concepts include 'demigrant', 'social dividend' and 'citizens income'.
3. In Francese and Prady's summary (2018: 6), the first option is well characterised as the Van Parijs position; the second is like the Friedman position though generally with individual payments. The word 'redistribute' is central to their summary discussion. Economic democracy – the expression of public property rights through public dividends – is about *distribution*, not *redistribution*.
4. An important 21st century advance has been the concepts of precarity and the precariat (Standing 2011). Standing (2017: 86) makes it clear that a UBI was always about basic security rather than social welfare.
5. An important piece of context here, is that, in December 1987, the New Zealand Labour Government announced it would implement a *low flat tax* (Ministry for Culture and Heritage 2018). Thus, my qualifier 'moderately high' is especially important. Other important qualifiers are 'based on', meaning that this was not proposed as a benefit to replace all other benefits. The phrase 'universal tax credit' indicates that the proposal belonged in the sub discipline of public finance. The 1991 paper was principally a challenge to conventional twentieth century interpretations of income tax; a progression of the 1980s' debate on *negative income tax*.
6. The initial context for the question was the partial sale of three publicly owned nationwide electricity generation companies. The fuel that generates most of New Zealand's electricity is water. As a result of those sales, more of the profits arising from 'free' water have been paid as *private* dividends.
7. Following the 'liberal' assumption, that dividend returning property is, by definition, not in the public domain.
8. Note the 'four capitals' (actually five, given that financial and physical

capital are not the same) of the New Zealand Treasury Living Standards framework, and the 'Six Capitals' (separating public intellectual capital from private human capital) discussed by Jane Gleeson-White (2014).

9. With a single rate of income tax understood as the price of public domain inputs, the presumption of a person's 'gross earnings' becomes redundant. True personal earnings are net of all business expenses. A person's 'gross income' is a convenient fiction that helps with the administration of graduated taxes, while also reinforcing the liberal view that income is inherently private.

10. Simon (2000) thought the public contribution was much more than half.

11. *Path dependent* presumptions are those that follow from the arbitrary sequences of historical practice, rather than from any set of coherent principles (David 2007). Refer to Rankin (2018b: 1).

12. Income tax was introduced in England in 1799. 'Deduction at source was introduced in 1803 by Henry Addington. At this time, the amount charged was reduced from the original rate of 10% on incomes in excess of £60 per annum' (politics.co.uk). So, *capitalists grossing over £60 would benefit from £60 worth of exemption*, whereas *labourers grossing less than £60 would benefit from less than £60 worth of exemption*. For New Zealand's first income tax, see Facer (2006: 51).

13. World War I created pressures to increase income tax. These higher tax requirements created pressures to complicate this simple regime by lowering exemptions and by introducing what might be called 'semi exemptions', low non zero marginal tax rates on low incomes.

14. Perhaps more to the point, as a person's gross income (gross earnings) falls below NZ\$50,000 the benefit becomes incrementally smaller. New Zealand has an explicit, cumulative benefit. It is called *KiwiSaver member tax credit*; and maximises at \$521 per week.

15. In Rankin (2017, 2018a) I called this 'graduation benefit' a *public equity benefit*, distinct from a 'public equity dividend'.

16. Economists call this 'available income' 'disposable income'. I favour the more user friendly name.

17. \$30 is 3% of \$1,000. 3% is 33% minus 30%. 30% is the statutory marginal rate of income tax applied to earnings between \$48,000 and \$70,000. A reduction of gross income from \$70,000 to \$69,000 will incur a loss of unconditional benefit of \$30.

18. \$225 is 22.5% of \$1,000. 22.5% is 33.0% minus 10.5%. 10.5% is the statutory marginal rate of income tax applied to earnings below \$14,000. A reduction of gross income from \$14,000 to \$13,000 will incur a loss of unconditional benefit of \$225.

19. A person who holds public equity. For example, it could mean a permanent resident of New Zealand aged over 18. Or it *could* mean something else, wider or narrower.

20. Both countries have other complexities. The United Kingdom has *allowances* (which are exemptions), best accounted for as middle class welfare.

21. 'Moral hazard' results in many persons with high market incomes consuming professional services in order to avoid income taxes. While the tax avoidance industry has no basis to exist in a country without tax.

22. All actual country examples are based on 2018/19 income tax rates. Australia has made subsequent changes to these rates.

23. Refer to Johnson (2010: Chapter 1) for a development of Stuart Kaufman's 2002 *adjacent possible* theory.

24. Standing (2014) argues that, not only is much of the present global workforce better categorised as denizens than as citizens – New Zealanders living and working in Australia are good examples – but that the condition of increased precarity makes effective citizenship a diminishing human reality.

Author

Keith Rankin teaches Economics and Statistics at Auckland's Unitec Institute of Technology (New Zealand). Keith has written widely on tax and welfare reform. His first paper which used the name Universal Basic Income was written in 1991, at a time in which New Zealand had its worst economic downturn since the Great Depression of the 1930s. He has always adopted a rights based approach to capitalist income distribution, emphasising the role of the public domain as a factor of production. From that perspective, a Basic Income represents at least a nominal return payable to the proprietors of the public domain.

Over the last ten years, Keith has crystallised these ideas through the concept of *public equity*, and by demonstrating that technically simple adjustments to the way governments account for income taxes can show that benefits concealed by tax-accounting conventions amount to a Basic Income. However, these potentially universal benefits are clawed-back from those on low incomes who most need them, who must then receive compensation through highly conditional transfer

benefits.

From the perspective of a mature capitalism with private and public hemispheres that reinforce each other, Keith argues that a Basic Income is a democratic right, in the same sense as a citizen's democratic right to vote.

Keith's most recent publication is *Public Equity and Tax-Benefit Reform*, a report published in December 2017 for the Policy Observatory at AUT University.

to our father

I never pause under a tree now,
it unsettles me to feel you
sitting on your favourite stool
beneath the fruit and vines.
I try winding back the clock
to a maybe time of something else.
It's happened. Yes, you're gone.

These photos are
a weak and plain remainder
of your so soft careful words,
of discipline, of constant whistling
to open up the heavy air,
your view obscured by half closed eyes
and shadow leaves and might have beens,
before we all stepped out of sight.
On our own. We hate it.

UGO ROTELLINI,
ADELAIDE, SA.

Social-Ecological Transformation and the Necessity of Universal Basic Income

JAMES P. MULVALE

This article surveys academic literature that argues for universal Basic Income (BI) on ecological grounds, and frames BI as a necessary (but not sufficient) measure to build sustainable, equal, and just societies. The ecological case for BI receives less emphasis than other justifications, such as the need to eradicate poverty, protect workers from precarious employment, advance social and political equality, and augment human freedom. This article also situates the green case for BI in broader and emerging academic literature on steady-state economics and de-growth. These are seen as requirements for averting further environmental degradation and ecological disasters, and for building truly sustainable and just societies. Conceptual frameworks that could underpin such a social-ecological transition include the capabilities approach formulated by Nussbaum, and the human needs framework advanced by Doyal and Gough. Finally, the article points to a series of public policy initiatives that are required, in addition to BI, to achieve sustainable and just societies. These policies encompass housing, food security, urban land use and planning, transportation, education, and health. It is argued that the public revenue to pay for these policy initiatives needs to be raised in ways that move us towards ecological sustainability and just economic redistribution.

Introduction

Ecological arguments for the implementation of Universal Basic Income (BI) receive less emphasis than other justifications, such as the need to eradicate poverty, protect workers from precarious employment, advance social and political equality, and augment human freedom. This article focuses on the ecological (or green) case for BI. It argues that BI is a necessary requirement to avert environmental disasters and build truly sustainable economies and just societies.

This article will have three foci. First, it will survey existing academic literature that advances ecological arguments for the implementation of BI. This body of work has been somewhat prominent in recent years. But in light of the current climate emergency and other aspects of rapid environmental decline, it is imperative that these ecological justifications figure more prominently in BI research, advocacy, and policy development.

Second, this article will examine the ecological case for BI in relation to emerging academic literature on *steady-state economics* and the need for *degrowth*, with a particular focus on over-consuming wealthy countries and on sectors of the economy that are environmentally destructive. A steady-state economy – whether at the local, regional, national, or global level – is ‘an economy

of stable or mildly fluctuating size’ that ‘may not exceed ecological limits’ (CASSE, nd). To achieve the goal of a steady-state economy that is both sustainable and just at the global level, wealthy societies must engage in de-growth – defined as the ‘downscaling of production and consumption that increases human well-being and enhances ecological conditions and equity on the planet’ (R & D, nd). Such de-growth in over-producing and over-consuming economies would have to be accompanied by the transfer of substantial economic wealth and resources to countries that are poor, as well as to the poor within wealthy countries, so that people in all corners of the globe can be assured a modest but adequate standard of living.

A focus of particular interest in this section will be how this literature on steady-state economics and degrowth engages with questions of social welfare policy, and especially with income security. Technological innovation and scientific knowledge are necessary in lowering our individual and collective carbon footprints. But innovative social policy is also required if we are to build steady-state economies and ecologically sustainable societies characterised by social justice and a high degree of economic equality. If economic activity is reduced, people must still have sufficient income – from some combination

of paid work in the labour market, and social transfers from collective wealth – so that they can meet their material needs and live a life characterised by social inclusion, political engagement, and meaningful personal choices.

The third purpose of this article is to outline the range of government action that is required (through new or revised legislation, public policy, and programs) so that we can bring about a social-ecological transformation (SET) to an ecologically benign steady-state economy and an environmentally sustainable society. It is argued here that BI is a *necessary but not sufficient* mechanism in such a SET. Taken together, BI and these other public policy measures comprise a big picture of what must be done to ensure a habitable biosphere in which subsequent generations of humans and other species can survive and flourish.

The importance of SET

The importance of achieving a SET is obvious. We are facing impending crises due to rapid and profound changes in our natural ecosystems at the local, bio-regional, and global levels. Our current era in natural history is often referred to as the Anthropocene in which ‘human-kind has caused mass extinctions of plant and animal species, polluted the oceans and altered the atmosphere, among other lasting impacts’ (Smithsonian nd). Our misuse and degradation of our natural environment have resulted in global warming resulting from greenhouse gas emissions, loss of biodiversity due to species extinction and habitat loss, resource depletion, accumulation of waste products, and health effects related to environmental toxins (Klein 2014; Gore 2017).

If the global economy is to achieve a SET, over-producing and over-consuming wealthy societies must end their addiction to open-ended and indiscriminate economic growth. As mentioned above, SET will entail degrowth – the shrinkage or elimination of environmentally harmful aspects of economic production and consumption. It will also entail a radical redistribution of income and wealth from nations, groups, and individuals with more than they need, to those with insufficient means for an adequate standard of living. Such redistribution would necessitate the provision of a sufficient monetary income, as well as a comprehensive range of high quality public goods, so that everyone would be assured a modest but sufficient material standard of living.

Although it is not a specific focus in this article, another outcome of SET could be a transformation in human values and lifestyles. SET would enable us, individually and collectively, to focus on the quality of our human relationships, mutual support in our local communities, and build social institutions and processes to achieve a

higher degree of social solidarity. We could move away from our current preoccupations – the existing global regime of capitalist accumulation – with either mere survival (by the world’s billions who are economically vulnerable), or with chasing fulfillment through material over-consumption (by those who live in wealthy countries saturated with unnecessary commodities).

The Green Case for BI

A decade ago, ecological arguments for and against basic income were outlined by Tony Fitzpatrick (1999). He cited three points in favour of BI. First of all, BI could be a means towards dampening down economic growth (Fitzpatrick 1999: 184), because it is a *universal* entitlement that is not premised on taxpaying workers who depend for their jobs on a growth-oriented and ‘full employment’ economy. Second, BI embodies an ethic of common ownership of the Earth’s resources and global citizenship which requires and enables everyone to be ‘a steward or a trustee whose duty is to hand on the Earth to the next generation of common owners’ (Fitzpatrick 1999: 187-88). As a third argument for BI, Fitzpatrick points to its role in reducing or eliminating poverty and unemployment traps, thereby making part-time and low-paid work more feasible and attractive, and moving us toward the goal of ‘redistributing available jobs by taking the emphasis away from the necessity of working full-time for several decades’ (1999: 188).

Fitzpatrick (1999) also outlines three reasons why ecological advocates might *oppose* BI. First of all, BI is only one mechanism, and would be unable on its own to bring about ‘a future ecological society’ without a range of other measures (Fitzpatrick 1999: 189). Second, BI recipients might opt to spend their money in ways that contribute to environmental damage and wasteful consumption (Fitzpatrick 1999: 190). Finally, paying a BI would require central administration, which runs counter to the goal of at least some environmentalists to decentralise and return control to the local level (Fitzpatrick 1999: 191). These objections can be countered, however, by embedding BI within a broader set of ecological policy measures (answering objection one), and by recognising that most BI recipients are non-wealthy and would most likely spend it on necessities, rather than on superfluous goods and services that contribute to over-consumption and waste (answering objection two). In regard to the third objection, Fitzpatrick (1999: 191) argues for ‘a continuing role for central government’ if we are to transition to a very different and sustainable set of economic arrangements; part of government’s role would in fact be to ‘facilitate decentralized self-management’ that many green activists call for.

A decade later Simon Birnbaum (2009: 2) guest-edited a special issue of *Basic Income Studies* on ‘Basic Income,

Sustainability and Post-Productivism'. In his introduction, Birnbaum (2009: 2) argued that '[t]he availability of a universal, work-independent source of basic security' and 'the creating of new forms of meaningful activity and integration beyond the employment contract' would mean that 'we no longer need to embrace unsustainable engines of growth in order to achieve full employment at any cost'. Birnbaum (2009: 2) outlined these 'new forms of meaningful activity' as 'local and service-intensive activities that rely much less on transports [sic] or material consumption' and that incorporate 'the expansion of community-based provision, volunteer work, cultural and sports activities, etc.'

In this same journal issue, Pierre-Marie Boulanger (2009) focused on 'changing the unsustainable consumption patterns in rich Western societies, which are the main cause of the ongoing environmental crisis'. The remedies, according to Boulanger, include *eco-efficiency* which refers to 'competitively priced goods and services that satisfy human needs and bring quality of life while progressively reducing environmental impacts of goods and resource intensity' (2010: 2). Another remedy is *de-commoditisation* – the substitution of non-commercial goods, services, and experiences for commercial ones, so that need and cultural value take precedence over profit (Boulanger 2010: 4). A third remedy combines two elements: *sufficiency*, the embrace of non-consumerist lifestyles based on 'getting the maximum well-being from each unit of material service consumed' and 'minimising the role of material services in the production of our well-being'; and *cultural dematerialisation*, deriving our sense of well-being not from material goods or sensual amusements, but from 'non-materialist values of self-control, spirituality, simplicity, etc.' (Boulanger 2010: 12). Although Boulanger (2009: 1) concludes that 'the impact of basic income on eco-efficiency is uncertain', he contends that BI 'could and should play a central role in a framework of sustainability', thereby achieving de-commoditisation, sufficiency, and cultural dematerialisation.

In his contribution to this special issue, Jan Otto Andersson (2009) proposes options on how to finance a BI. It could be funded in an ecologically benign way, such as by green taxes designed to curb consumption among the well off, and linked to eco-tax relief for low income people, thereby maximising both eco-efficiency and distributive justice. A BI could also be financed in ecologically damaging ways, through deliberate growth of the economy to bolster the tax base, or through natural resource rents that would incentivise the state to increase resource extraction. Andersson also offers ecologically sound macro-economic strategies for BI implementation related to the wealth of the country in question. In the interests of global equity, Andersson (2009: 1) proposes 'linking a BI to ecological taxes and degrowth in the

overconsuming societies', but using BI as a tool for economic development and the alleviation of economic deprivation in regions with high poverty.

A green case for BI is also made by Greg Marston (2016: 157), who addresses the challenge of 'how to create conditions for human flourishing within the ecological limits of a finite planet'. He notes that, as a guiding principle, the development of 'a greener economy [must] not exacerbate social inequalities and injustices within and between countries' (Marston 2016: 157). Marston (2016: 174) also cautions that 'basic income is not a panacea', but that it 'can be seen as a progressive insurance policy against a host of direct and indirect risks associated with climate change'.

Similar to Andersson (2009) cited above, Marston (2016: 174) sees the rationale for, and means of, financing BI as being different for wealthy as opposed to poorer parts of the world. In rich countries, 'a basic income could be a key platform in addressing unsustainable economic growth, environmental pollution, and the problem of over-consumption and population'. For poor nations, BI 'may increase local economic growth and be a part of the solution to poverty problems'. Marston (2016: 165) also sees BI as tied to an expanded definition of 'societal well-being' that is 'focused on the distribution of wealth, but also on the distribution of time and opportunities for the expression of human agency that are not instrumentally tied to labor market status or potential for profit'.

Such a profound economic shift will not be easy. Marston (2016: 161) points out that in our present context the state is 'deeply conflicted, striving on the one hand to encourage consumer freedoms that lead to growth and on the other to protect social goods and defend ecological limits'. Securing public support for 'new welfare paradigms' and proposals such as BI will 'require informed public dialogue and debate' (Marston 2016: 170). Processes based on 'deliberative policy making and planning' could not only 'act as an antidote to overly technocratic and rational-scientific modes of policy making', but could also 'encourage preference transformation in ways which are sympathetic to environmental goals' (Marston 2016: 170).

Linking BI With Steady-state Economics and Degrowth

It is important to situate the question of BI as a guarantor of income security for all in relation to a broader set of macro-economic questions. These refer to ending our addiction to economic growth and creating ecologically sustainable societies that are prosperous and democratic. In highly developed and ecologically destructive societies, BI would ensure that the non-wealthy majority have enough money for a decent life in an economy that is not growing, and in

which jobs are being lost in ecologically harmful industries such as fossil fuel extraction and refining, the manufacture of armaments, and the production of luxury goods and services. It can be noted that liberal democratic countries that adopted a version of the Keynesian welfare state in the three decades following World War Two never actually attained their stated goal of a full employment economy. Given the current imperative to immediately decelerate and then end growth in over-developed economies, we must once and for all set aside the goal of full employment (understood as full-time, well paid jobs for everyone in the paid labour market). Hence, we need to work to achieve viable iterations of steady state-economies (varying in form by particular societies' resource base, stage of development, and level of relative wealth), to manage and mitigate the various aspects of our current ecological crisis.

It is readily apparent, notwithstanding ecological imperatives, that the shift to lower employment rates is already underway as a result of technologies, including robotics and artificial intelligence (Brynjolfsson and McAfee 2014; Kaplan 2015). The relations of production under global industrial capitalism have always been characterised by alienation (Marx 1978) – by jobs that are unfulfilling, unpleasant, and often hazardous to one's physical and mental health. The eclipse of human 'wage slavery' through having technology carry out such work can be seen as a desirable goal – provided that all of us have a reliable, adequate, and unconditional income in the form of a BI.

In the context of a SET, there could be a broad redistribution of paid work, and an increase in everyone's discretion over their time. A BI would provide a dependable floor of economic security to enable this transition to sustainability and greater human freedom. But even in light of the displacement of alienated labour by technology, we must ask ourselves if it is possible or desirable for robots and artificial intelligence to replace *all* forms of human labour. It is probable in a steady-state economy that working-age adults would perform on average fewer hours of paid work. We would all have much more choice about how and when to apply ourselves to remunerative employment, care work in the family, personal and leisure pursuits, cultural production, and unpaid community and voluntary service. In this vein, Marston (2016: 173) argues for a justification for BI 'reframed in terms of human security and genuine sustainability, rather than facilitating labor market participation at whatever personal and environmental cost'. He argues for 'developing social citizenship, greater autonomy in relation to the state and markets, the abolition of poverty traps and the creation of meaningful employment and voluntarism' (2016: 173).

The question of whether SET is in fact achievable in the context of current regime of globalised capitalism is fundamental. Will tinkering at the margins with incremental economic reforms be sufficient to bring about a SET? Or is more radical change required, if we are to bring about an authentic social-ecological *transformation*? Blauwhof (2012) argues for the necessity of the latter path. Using a Marxist political economy framework, Blauwhof contends that 'a stable and just SSE [steady state economy] is possible, but not feasible within the social relations of capitalism'. However, he does not see 'reform' or 'revolution' as mutually exclusive ends. Blauwhof (2012: 261) argues that useful reform can be achieved only with a revolutionary vision and quest. Drawing on the work of Daly (2008) and others, Blauwhof (2012: 259) identifies seven useful social-economic reforms arising out of the work of ecological economists:

1. Minimum and maximum income and wealth limits
2. Progressive income taxes
3. Public employment programmes such as a Job Guarantee
4. Basic income
5. Reducing the work week
6. Spreading ownership of wealth and businesses
7. Organising businesses as producer cooperatives

Such reforms, according to Blauwhof (2012: 261), could be inspired and guided by a revolutionary vision to deconstruct the 'dynamics of capitalist reproduction' and 'the drive to accumulation'. Bringing about such a transformation would involve a strategic alliance between the environmental movement and the labour movement. The former constituency fully grasps the ecological threats facing us. The latter constituency is composed of workers, who according to Blauwhof (2012: 261) are 'those who as the creators of the products and profits of corporations, are in a unique position to gain control over the qualitative decisions about what, how and for what purpose goods and services are produced'.

This process of transformation would not be identical in all societies and countries. Buch-Hansen (2014: 167) offers a critique that 'not enough importance is ascribed to capitalist diversity and the nature of institutional change' in scholarship on steady-state economics. Thinking on steady-state economics has evolved since the 1970s, from being a relatively 'apolitical' idea to one that is now 'premised on left-wing values' (Buch-Hansen 2014: 172). It is to be expected that transitions to steady-state economies will occur in different ways – depending, for instance, on whether a given country has a 'liberal', 'state-led', or 'coordinated' form of capitalism

(p. 170). Buch-Hansen (2014: 172) sees an advantage in 'acknowledging the possibility of a variety of SSEs [steady-state economies] based on competing political ideas', so that 'de-growth could come to have much broader political appeal than it currently does'.

Koch (2013) sketches a broad picture of how to achieve societal welfare in a post-growth context, in which we must achieve a 'politically monitored socio-economic and environmental development strategy within the ecological limits identified by natural scientists' (Koch 2013: 10). He draws upon research on human happiness to make the point 'that once countries have sufficient wealth to meet the basic needs of their citizens and reach a certain per capita income', then 'reported levels of (un)happiness show little correlation with GDP growth' (p. 10). Koch (2013: 11) also notes that 'extra happiness provided by extra income is greatest for the poorest and declines steadily as people get richer'. Happiness is not determined by growth in the GDP but by the seven factors of 'family relationships, financial situation, work, community and friends, health, personal freedom and personal values' (Koch 2013: 11).

Koch (2013: 11) is particularly critical of how 'positional goods' (the consumption of which bestows upon users high social status) are held out as objects of value and desire by 'various culture industries'. This 'never-ending cycle' of stimulating and meeting consumer demand for luxury goods and superfluous services 'contributes next to nothing to human welfare and contradicts the principal reproductive needs of the earth as an ecological system'. But the cycle continues and props up the capitalist imperatives of production, profit and accumulation.

As an alternative to such a cycle of production and consumption based on psychological stress, moral vacuity and ecological destruction, Koch (2013: 12) recommends that our goal should be to create conditions in which all human beings can exercise 'Martha Nussbaum's list of ten central capabilities [as] a promising point of departure for redefining welfare'. These capabilities are grounded in 'socio-economic and ecological aspects of welfare' that incorporate

life (ability to live a life of normal length); bodily health and integrity; senses, imagination and thought; emotions (being able to have attachments to things and people outside ourselves); practical reason; affiliation (being able to live with and toward others, to recognize and show concern for other human beings); other species (being able to live with concern for and in relation to animals, plants, and the world of nature); play; [and] control over one's environment (political participation, economic

and employment rights) (Nussbaum 2006 cited in Koch 2013: 18 [note 4]).

Koch (2013: 12) argues that Nussbaum's articulation of human capabilities does not require greater wealth or production, is not a zero-sum competitive game among different social groups or generations, and should not be equated with austerity. In fact, the capabilities approach can bring about a 'transition from a consumerist society to a welfare society' (Koch 2013: 12) that would prioritise 'inward aspects of human wellbeing' instead of 'outward manifestations of status and success' (De Geus 2009: 121 cited in Koch 2013: 13).

An alternative framework to use in examining strategies for degrowth (in addition to metrics related to human happiness or the ability to exercise human capabilities, as discussed above) is one focused on 'the centrality of human needs' (Koch et al. 2017). In this approach, there is a 'deprioritization of subjective well-being' and the adoption of 'an alternative degrowth research agenda oriented [to] the satisfaction of human needs' (Koch et al. 2017: 74). They recommend the human needs framework of Doyal and Gough (1991) that posits two 'basic needs' of *physical and mental health*, and *critical autonomy* (the ability to make informed choices) (Koch et al. (2017: 74). The first basic need for health is linked to a set of 'universal intermediate needs': adequate nutritional food and water, adequate protective housing, a non-hazardous work environment, a non-hazardous physical environment, and appropriate health care. The second basic need for critical autonomy is linked to another distinct set of intermediate needs: security in childhood, significant primary relationships, physical security, economic security, safe birth control and child-bearing, and basic education. Doyal and Gough's needs framework also includes a third level (beyond basic and intermediate needs) of 'culturally, socially and locally specific satisfiers' related to 'cultures, sub-cultures, states and political systems' that must be discerned through careful analysis of specific groups.

Koch et al. (2017: 77) find the Doyal and Gough (1991) framework 'particularly relevant for degrowth research' because of the 'centrality of the notion of environmental limits that define different levels of need satisfaction, especially the lowest level – understood as a "minimally decent life" '. Although they do not address basic income *per se* in this article, it can be easily seen that a BI could be the primary means for satisfying the intermediate need for 'economic security' and would indirectly contribute to satisfying other intermediate needs related to physical and mental health and personal autonomy.

In thinking beyond BI to other aspects of public and macro-economic policy, Koch (2013: 13) is critical of 'no-growth

theorists' fragmented ideas for reform'. But Koch (2013: 13-16) does point to a number of general policy goals¹ that must be pursued:

- Lowering social inequality through economic redistribution, given that more equal societies have less serious social problems such as poor health and high crime rates, and can achieve greater eco-efficiency by not having to address severe aspects of such social problems. Economic redistribution to achieve greater equality can be accomplished partly through green taxes on those who consume excessively
- Setting minimum and maximum incomes, to increase economic equality and lower the average carbon footprint
- Rationing carbon expenditure through resource and emission caps in a way that places a heavier burden on the wealthy and lessens the burden on the poor
- Lowering overall consumption levels out of a 'sense of obligation toward future generations'. Steps toward this goal could include the regulation of advertising (e.g. banning advertising to children), imposition of stiffer taxes on burning fossil fuels and on consuming luxury and ecologically damaging goods and services, and implementing stronger curriculum in the public education system on the need for ecological values and environmental stewardship.
- Ensuring working time reduction for all through measures such as BI
- Supporting better work–life balance, which a BI would also support
- Achieving population stability (and perhaps even a decrease) through a variety of measures such as better education and job prospects for girls and women in poorer countries, and universal access to reproductive health services. It should also be a goal to stem crisis-driven migration from poorer countries through improving living conditions and human rights in these countries.

Heikkinen (2018) uses mathematical modelling to draw links between consumption, degrowth, and BI. She applies the Bernoulli-Nash aggregate calculation to demonstrate that 'collaborative consumption' (defined as 'non-ownership models of utilising goods and services') and basic income can 'support welfare-increasing degrowth' (Heikkinen 2018: 44). She also finds that de-growth can create levels of higher overall welfare, even in conditions of inequality in the allocation of wealth, and that this process is enhanced when economic agents embrace 'voluntary simplicity' (restrictions on consumption). She

presents voluntary simplicity as a necessary but not sufficient condition for degrowth (Heikkinen 2018: 43).

Are we making progress towards a socially sustainable steady-state economy? O'Neill (2015: 1213) indicates that '[t]here are no countries that achieve a true steady-state economy', and 'that the majority of countries in the world are biophysical growth economies'. He concludes that 'a steady-state economy can be socially sustainable, but countries need to become much more efficient at transforming natural resources into human well-being if all seven billion people on Earth are to lead a good life within ecological limits'.

Weiss and Cattaneo (2017) trace the trajectory of our understanding of 'degrowth' over a ten year period between 2006 and 2015. They argue that this idea began as one rooted in environmental activism, but evolved into 'a multi-disciplinary academic paradigm' that 'occupies a small but expanding niche at the intersection of social and applied environmental sciences' (Weiss and Cattaneo 2017: 220). They contend that the academic research on degrowth could contribute to building both 'wider public support' and 'a paradigmatic change in the social sciences' through investigation of key questions such as 'analyzing the potentials for non-market value creation' and 'identifying concrete well-being benefits' in economic conditions of degrowth (Weiss and Cattaneo 2017: 220).

In regard to the overall state of sustainability research, Görg et al. (2017: 14) argue that 'the current debate on transformations towards sustainability can be improved by a critical, inter- and trans-disciplinary approach to social-ecological transformations'. They call for conceptual and empirical reliance upon work done in social ecology and political ecology, and the use of '[a]n integrative perspective that aligns analytical, normative and strategic dimensions' (Görg et al. 2017: 14). That takes full account of 'the crisis-driven and contested character of the appropriation of nature and the power relations involved' (Görg et al. 2017: 1). Recognising that aspects of SET are always occurring – whether in positive directions towards sustainability, and/or in negative directions towards more acute unsustainability – Görg et al. (2017: 14-16) emphasise the importance of appreciating 'three strong tendencies ("grammars") that structure the industrial and fossilist mode of production and regulation of [societal relations to nature]':

- the colonising of nature or land taking;
- the capitalist grammar of capital accumulation, the growth imperative and the predominance of the production of surplus values over the production of use values; and

- a multi-scalar perspective that does not lose out of sight the global, despite the great deal of attention paid to local struggles and the predominance of national-level policy questions and political-economic processes.

What Else Is Necessary Besides BI?

So far this article has focused on the ecological justification for BI, and on a broader set of questions to do with social-ecological transition to steady-state economies and sustainable and just societies. This concluding section presents a brief list of general public policy initiatives which are likely to be required – in addition to BI – if we are to achieve a fundamental transformation in our political economies towards the goal of ecological sustainability. BI is, however, a necessary, but not sufficient, precondition for SET. What other goals must we set for ourselves as grand challenges in public policy?

These goals come readily to mind:

1. *adequate and affordable* housing for all, built or retro-fitted according to rigorous environmental standards, with units that are modest in size and optimally energy-efficient;
2. *food security for all* focused on consumption of maximally sustainable food sources (e.g. locally sourced whole foods rather than industrially-produced processed foods that are transported long distances to markets; more reliance on plant protein as an alternative to carbon-intensive production chains for products such as meat and dairy);
3. *labour market restructuring* (underpinned by BI) that emphasises job creation in sectors such as renewable energy production, environmental reclamation and management, and public-sector care and service work; and creation of new patterns of employment that include job sharing, part-time work, flexible work schedules, career sabbaticals, and retraining for new green jobs;
4. *low- or no-carbon transportation options* (e.g. free local public transit, rapid ground-based intercity transit, car-sharing and car-pooling, and carbon offset requirements for air travel);
5. *zero (overall) population growth* through ready provision of fertility control methods and reproductive health services, vocational and educational options for girls and women in poor countries, and social policy incentives for smaller nuclear families and enrichment of relationships between children and adults in the broader extended family structure;
6. *land-use planning and habitat protection* that maximise natural space and species diversity, and

control urban sprawl and ecologically unsound local development;

7. robust ecological *education* at primary, secondary and tertiary levels, and public education on sustainable lifestyle choices that are low-carbon, localised, and convivial; and

8. environmentally efficient *health care* focussed on non-institutional and community-integrated care, including professionally delivered, high quality home care, and multi-disciplinary care in accessible community locations. Steps should also be taken to reduce material waste in health care, and decrease the use of tests and treatments that (based on clinical evidence) may not be efficacious. The overall health care system should redirect significant resources to disease prevention and health promotion as 'upstream' strategies that will lessen the need for 'downstream' (very resource-intensive) management of ill health.

Needless to say, this long and ambitious list of public policy initiatives will require significant streams of public revenue for implementation.

The question of financing a SET cannot be exhaustively addressed in this brief article. But suffice it to say that the required public revenue should be secured in ways that help move us towards a sustainable economy and a just society. The necessary tax revenue for a SET could no doubt be raised through these types of mechanisms:

- Progressive income tax (operating together with an adequate BI, to achieve a more just redistribution of economic wealth).
- Heavier reliance on taxes on carbon emissions and on luxury goods and services, in order to curb wasteful consumption and encourage all of us to live lightly on the planet Earth.
- Rigorous taxation of revenue derived from the buying and selling of real estate, stocks, foreign currencies, and other financial instruments based on speculative greed and quick profit-taking.

Conclusion

The Anthropocene is an era which we have been living through by some estimates (Meyer 2019) for almost seven decades. Radical and multi-faceted action is absolutely required, at local, bio-regional, national, and global levels, if further environmental degradation and ecological disasters are to be averted.

In light of the daunting challenges we face – that of simultaneously reclaiming the ecological health of the

planet and achieving social justice for human societies – it is important to maintain some hope for positive change. The situation is dire, but we must not let ourselves be paralysed by what Stoett (2019: 2) refers to as ‘postmodern planetary anxiety’. We must be motivated by our concern for future generations, and by the sober recognition that ‘we are in collective trouble’ (Stoett 2019: 2).

This collective anxiety could spur on at least three constituencies that would seem to have an indispensable role to play in bringing about a SET. These key actors are: i) radically critical and well informed components of the broad social movement for social justice and ecological health (including organised labour and environmental advocates); ii) theoreticians and researchers who can offer strategic guidance and pragmatic solutions required for a SET; and iii) ‘inside activists’ in government and public sector institutions (as described by Hysing and Olsson 2018) who can manipulate the levers of power in consultation with ‘outside’ change agents from environmental movements, academia, and citizens’ organisations.

Success in jointly meeting the two grand challenges of social justice and environmental sustainability is not impossible. These challenges are more likely to be met if all of us – whether we are activists, academic experts, political and community leaders, or engaged citizens – have a secure economic floor underneath us and our families in the form of a Universal Basic Income.

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End Note

1. The general categories in this list correspond to those advanced by (Koch 2013: 13 – 16), but I introduce some of my own ideas and examples in the brief explanations of each category.

Author

Dr. James Mulvale is an Associate Professor in the Faculty of Social Work at the University of Manitoba, Canada, and is based at St. Paul’s College. His research interests include universal basic income, social work theory, and distance education pedagogy in social work. He serves in voluntary capacities with the Basic Income Canada Network and the Ontario Basic Income Network. He has served in university administrative capacities as a Department Head, Associate Dean, and Dean, the latter two roles being in Faculties of Social Work.

Testing Different Routes to a Basic Income Scheme

MALCOLM TORRY

This article will explore a variety of aspects of the recent debate on Basic Income, particularly in relation to the United Kingdom; it will discuss financial feasibility; describe a variety of feasibility tests; and describe several different routes that Basic Income might take from concept to implementation: a) 'replacement' – a Basic Income for everyone legally resident in a country, implemented all in one go, with at the same time the abolition of the existing social security system; b) 'alongside' – a Basic Income for everyone legally resident, implemented all in one go, with the existing social security system retained and modified; c) 'single age group' – a Basic Income for everyone in a particular age group, followed by other age groups; d) 'pilot project' – a Basic Income for a representative sample of a country's population, followed by extension to the whole population; and e) 'single age group pilot project' – a Basic Income for a representative sample of one age group, followed by extension to the whole of the age group, and then to other age groups. General descriptions of the different routes will be accompanied by descriptions of what they might look like in the United Kingdom, and by discussions of their feasibilities. An indication is given as to how the findings might relate to Australia.

Introduction

The global debate about Basic Income (BI) has experienced a number of changes. Perhaps the most noticeable is the debate's transition from fringe to mainstream. Thirty years ago BI was an idea on the fringe of social policy debate. Now it is at the heart of it. This change has been accompanied by a change in the debate's extent. Whereas thirty years ago it was a debate among a handful of academics and interested others, it now involves politicians, journalists, think tanks, university departments, and activists. Thirty years ago it was possible to count the number of people involved in the debate, and to keep up with the books, papers and articles being written on the subject. Now it is not. A further change relates to the debate's depth. Thirty years ago the debate was purely about the desirability of BI. This was evaluated in three particular ways: on the basis of a narrow range of ideological commitments – 'real freedom for all' and 'equality'; as a response to increasing automation; and as a solution to poverty and unemployment traps. Today, BI's desirability is discussed on the basis of multiple ideological commitments, across the whole of the Left/Right spectrum and beyond it; in connection with a more diverse debate about the possible futures of employment; and in relation to broad swathes of the social policy field: ecology, housing policy, employment, social cohesion, and so on. As the debate has evolved, no elements have disappeared from it. Within each country, the debate has been

complex and diverse. There has also been considerable diversity between the debates in different countries, and because information flows quite freely between different parts of the debate, its evolution has been by constant reformulation and addition, resulting in the highly complex global debate that we experience today.

As well as the increasing globalisation of the debate, the major changes during the past five years have been its extension from the question of desirability to questions about feasibility and implementation: the latter change being particularly noticeable in the UK. This article discusses a set of feasibility tests, and applies them to a number of ways for implementing BI schemes and pilot projects. What the schemes and pilot projects might look like in the UK is discussed, and an indication is given as to how the article's findings might be applied in Australia.

For the purpose of clarity: BI, Citizen's Income, Universal Basic Income and Citizen's Basic Income all mean the same thing: an unconditional and non-withdrawable income for every legally resident individual. A 'BI scheme' states the levels of Basic Income for each age group, specifies the funding method, and lists any changes to existing tax and benefits arrangements. There are an infinite number of possible schemes, and different schemes would have different effects.

Financial Feasibility

The question of feasibility has always been a feature of the debate in the UK, as evidenced by some of the literature from the late 1980s and early 1990s (Parker 1989; Brittan and Webb 1990). But now that the reasons for establishing a BI are widely understood – even if they are rejected – the question of feasibility has become increasingly important, and objections are now more likely to be framed as arguments for infeasibility than as arguments for undesirability.

A prominent and unique aspect of the BI debate in the UK has been the amount of effort that has been put into researching the question of financial feasibility. Two methods have been employed. For schemes that abolish means-tested benefits, the national accounts and census data can be employed to calculate the net cost of a BI scheme (Citizen's Income Trust 2007; Haarman and Haarman 2007; Miller 2017; Painter and Thong 2015). Unfortunately, this method cannot evaluate the net cost of schemes that retain and recalculate means-tested benefits, nor can it discover how many low-income households might suffer losses at the point of implementation. It has therefore become essential to employ micro-simulation: computer programs into which are coded the regulations of a country's tax and benefits systems, and through which are passed data from the Family Resources Survey, which regularly surveys the financial details of a 0.1% sample of the UK's population. Running the micro-simulation program can generate a variety of statistics, such as poverty and inequality indices, household disposable incomes, and the numbers of households on means-tested benefits. The software can then be reprogrammed to represent changed tax and benefits systems – for instance, by adding BI's of different amounts for different age groups, changing income tax rates and personal allowances, and taking those changes into account when means-tested benefits are recalculated – and the program can then be run again. The outputs for the BI scheme can then be compared with those for the current tax and benefits system. Martinelli and Reed each choose a variety of BI schemes and test for their effects (Martinelli 2017a; 2017b; 2017c; Reed and Lansley 2016). This author takes a different approach. He first sets some feasibility criteria (revenue neutrality, reductions in poverty and inequality, income tax rates to rise by no more than 3%, minimal losses for low income households, only manageable losses for any household, and significant numbers of households leaving means-tested benefits) and then, by changing in turn the different parameters of the BI scheme, these are then tested to see whether there is a scheme that fits the criteria. It turns out that there is (Torry 2015, 2016c, 2016d, 2017, 2018).

Feasibility tests

The feasibility tests that I shall be applying in this paper are as follows (De Wispelaere and Stirton 2011; 2012; De Wispelaere and Noguera 2012; Torry 2016a):

- *Financial*: There are two kinds of financial feasibility, not just one:

a) *Fiscal feasibility*: Would it be possible to finance a BI? In today's financial climate it is likely that BIs will only be thought to be financially feasible if they are funded by making adjustments to the current tax and benefits systems.

b) *Household financial feasibility*: Would implementation impose significant financial losses on any households or individuals? If low income households would suffer losses on the implementation of a BI scheme, or if any households would suffer significant losses, then the scheme would not be thought financially feasible.

- *Psychological*: Is the idea readily understood, and understood to be beneficial? Satisfying this feasibility test will never be easy. Most countries' populations, if not all, will contain large numbers of people, and probably majorities, who believe that giving people money without attaching conditions would mean that they would no longer seek employment, and that it would be foolish to give money to the rich who do not need it. There are of course good reasons for doing both of those things – unconditional benefits would not contribute to high marginal deduction rates in the way that means-tested benefits do; and it is efficient and non-stigmatising to give money to everyone and then to tax the rich. It is always possible for individuals to experience paradigm shifts: but a population paradigm shift can be a slow business. For good reasons, legislators don't stray too far from majority public opinion: so the psychological feasibility test will probably need to be passed before political and policy process feasibility tests can be attempted.

- *Behavioural*: Would a BI deliver the benefits promised for it? Short-term BI pilot projects and other experiments can give some indication as to how employment market activity would be affected by a permanent BI (Gilbert et al. 2018), but until a permanent BI is implemented, we cannot test properly for behavioural feasibility. The test is listed here because if it is not passed post-implementation then the BI will not last.

- *Administrative*: This is another feasibility test in two parts:

o Would it be possible to administer a BI? Experience of administering existing unconditional incomes, such as the UK's Child Benefit, shows that administering unconditional incomes is far easier than administering

other kinds of benefit. This is the easiest feasibility test to pass.

o Would it be possible to manage the transition? This part of the administrative feasibility test would be more challenging: not because there is anything complicated about a BI, but because most countries' current tax and benefits systems are complex. Because it is likely that BIs would initially need to be funded out of current tax and benefits systems, those systems would need to be altered as BIs were implemented. That will never be easy.

- Political: Would the idea cohere with existing political ideologies? Because every country's political parties and other political actors are particular to that country, no generalisations are possible. Only a detailed study of governments', political parties' and other political actors' ideological commitments and current concerns, and of statements made by members of those governments, parties, and actors, will determine whether this test can be passed.
- Policy process: Would the policy process be able to process the idea to implementation? This too is a highly country-specific test. Every country's policy process is different, and all of them are complex, being made up of numerous institutions and individuals, such as think tanks and public servants, connected by complex networks of relationships. Navigating the best ideas through the policy process can prove highly problematic, and navigating contested ideas through it can be almost impossible.

But having said all of that: policy accidents can occur, where new policies are implemented without passing all of the tests listed, and sometimes without passing any of them (Torry 2016a: 238-39) – although of course such policy accidents can be short-lived if the tests are not passed subsequent to implementation.

I shall now outline five routes to the implementation of BI, and I shall then ask whether they might be able to pass the feasibility tests.

Five Routes to Implementation

Different possibilities for BI schemes might be available in the short, the medium, and the longer term. For instance: while it might be possible in the longer term to fund a sizeable BI from a sovereign wealth fund, financial transaction taxes, and a land value tax, in the short to medium term that would not be administratively, financially, or politically feasible; whereas to implement a small BI funded by rearranging the current tax and benefits system might be entirely feasible within a single parliamentary term. I here list five possible ways of

implementing a BI scheme in today's context, recognising that further steps might be possible in the longer term (Torry 2016b).

a) Replacement: A BI for everyone legally resident in a country, implemented all in one go, simultaneously abolishing the existing social security system, possibly during the course of a single parliamentary term. In the UK, this would mean the abolition of means-tested benefits, and possibly of social insurance (National Insurance) benefits as well: although the differences between housing costs in different parts of the country would probably require the retention of a means-tested Housing Benefit.

b) Alongside: A BI for everyone legally resident, implemented with the existing social security system retained and modified. In the UK, this would mean the retention of the entire means-tested and National Insurance benefits systems, with households' means-tested benefits being recalculated on the basis that household members would be receiving BIs, and that changes to the tax system would have altered the relationship between gross and net earnings.

c) Single age group: A BI for everyone in a particular age group, followed by other age groups. In the UK, the process might be as follows: enhancing the existing universal Child Benefit (this is still unconditional, although additional income tax now has to be paid by high earners living in households that receive Child Benefit); turning the new Single Tier State Pension into a genuine Citizen's Pension, or BI for elderly people (that is, making legal residence rather than the National Insurance Contribution record the criterion for receipt); paying a BI to young adults aged 16 to 18, or perhaps 18 to 21; paying a BI to the pre-retired (possibly after a period of inviting volunteers from this age group); and then paying a BI for working age adults.

d) Pilot project: A BI for a representative sample of a country's population, followed by extension to the whole population. In the UK, a relatively isolated community would be chosen, and a BI scheme (including associated changes to the current tax and benefits systems) would be implemented. The pilot would then be evaluated, preferably against a control community.

e) Single age group pilot project: A BI for a representative sample of one age group, followed by extension to the whole of the age group, and then to other age groups. In the UK, we might choose 16 to 18 year olds, or 18 to 21 year olds, as their relationships with the current tax and benefits systems tend to be simpler than for older age groups.

Testing the Five Routes to Implementation

a) *A BI for everyone legally resident in a country, implemented all in one go, simultaneously abolishing the existing social security system.*

The BI for working age adults would need to be set high enough to replace the main unemployment benefits, otherwise far too many low income households would automatically lose disposable income at the point of implementation; and such a scheme would require substantial increases in income tax rates. In a UK context, this kind of scheme would impose substantial losses on many low income households, and on far too many other households as well (Torry 2015). If additional funds were to be available from outside the tax and benefits systems then the scheme could pass all of the feasibility tests except for the fiscal feasibility test: so, with additional funds, and a redrafted fiscal feasibility test to permit a constant injection of additional funding, this route to implementation could be feasible.

Even if additional funding could be found, psychological feasibility would be difficult to secure, particularly among higher earners experiencing sizeable increases in tax rates. Because the psychological feasibility test would be difficult to pass, and making the required changes to the existing tax and benefits system could be difficult to achieve in a short period of time, it would also be difficult to get this implementation route through the political and policy process feasibility tests (Torry 2016b: 15).

b) *A BI for everyone legally resident, implemented all in one go, with the existing social security system retained and modified.*

This scheme could be funded from within the current tax and benefits system, it would not generate losses of any significance for low income households, and it would generate few losses for other households (Torry 2018), so this scheme could pass the fiscal and household financial feasibility tests. Because the current benefits system would not need to be changed, the administration of the transition would be fairly simple. Because each household on means-tested benefits would have their benefit claim reduced by the BIs coming into the household, many households would come off means-tested benefits, and many more would be brought closer to coming off them. Every household enabled by their BIs to escape from means-testing would generate administrative simplification, and because the BI itself would be very simple to administer, the overall effect would be a reduction in administrative complexity.

c) *A BI for everyone in a particular age group, followed by other age groups.*

Feasibility would be highly country-specific, and would depend on the age group. For instance, in the UK context, and possibly elsewhere, an unconditional income for children would be more acceptable than one for working age adults: so in the UK a start could be made by enhancing the current Child Benefit, and possibly equalising the amounts paid for the first and subsequent children. Where there is not a Citizen's Pension, that could be a priority: so in the UK the new Single Tier State Pension could be turned into a Citizen's Pension. One way of choosing the age group to which the first BI's would be paid would be to ask which age groups face the greatest challenges in relation to their income strategies. In the UK that might be young adults aged 18 to 21, and the pre-retired, from the late 50s to state pension age.

With a single age group, and particularly one with less complicated relationships with the current tax and benefits systems, neither of the financial feasibilities would be difficult to pass. By choosing a 'more deserving' age group, and particularly one for which everyone recognises that the ways in which they receive subsistence incomes are far from ideal, a psychological feasibility test should not be too difficult to pass – so political and policy process feasibilities could follow. A BI for every young person between their eighteenth and twenty-second birthdays would be popular with them and with their parents as a contribution to maintenance costs during further education and training. With a limited age range, behavioural feasibility would be easy to test after implementation, and could help to build the psychological feasibility required for implementation for the next age group.

d) *A pilot project: A BI for a representative sample of the population in an isolated community.*

In a developing country, every member of an entire community or communities can be given a small unconditional income without adjustments having to be made to existing tax or benefits systems, and at relatively little cost. Communities can often be sufficiently isolated and stable to enable the same people to remain in the pilot from beginning to end. Such pilot projects have been carried out in Namibia and India, and they have delivered significant positive results in relation to health, education, democracy, and economic activity, particularly among households with the lowest original disposable incomes (Basic Income Grant Coalition, Namibia 2009; Davala et al., Jhabvala, Mehta and Standing 2014; Torry 2009). However, in both cases there was one sense in which they were not in fact genuine pilot projects. The behavioural effects of a permanent BI scheme would be different from the effects of a scheme established for only two years, particularly in relation to labour market and other economic activity. Both the Namibian and Indian projects were for two years or less. The positive changes that the

two projects delivered in terms of economic activity during that short timespan suggest that a permanent scheme would generate even more additional economic activity: but only the establishment of permanent BIs would be able to prove that.

The construction of pilot projects for BI schemes will always pose more problems in countries with existing complex tax and benefits systems. Any permanent BI established in a more developed country would probably need to be largely funded by making adjustments to existing systems: so a genuine pilot project would need to take a representative sample of the population and change their tax rates, tax allowances, and means-tested benefits, in the same way in which they would be changed if there were a nationwide BI. This would absorb much government time and energy, and there would be understandable resistance to attempting it. Finding sufficiently isolated and stable communities would also be problematic. If the community was not sufficiently isolated then people would come and go, so decisions would be required as to whether people who left the community should cease to be part of the experiment, and whether people who moved in would become part of it. Cross-border commuting would also be problematic if employers collect income tax on behalf of the government, because someone living in pilot project town A and working in town B would need their employer to relate to the tax and benefits systems according to the rules of the pilot project, and *vice versa*, meaning that many employers would need to operate two parallel tax collecting systems. A community that was sufficiently isolated to avoid this problem would be unlikely to be representative of the country as a whole.

The experiment that took place in Finland for two years from January 2017 to December 2018 will produce some useful results in relation to employment market behaviour, and those results might inform our understanding of the likely employment market effects of a BI. However, the experiment was of limited duration, and only involved a limited number of randomly selected currently unemployed individuals (Kela 2016), and was not a representative sample of the population: so whether it can be called a BI pilot project is open to question. A randomised selection of an entire population, rather than of unemployed individuals, might be an option for a future pilot project in a developed country, but as with the saturation site option discussed above, adjusting existing tax and benefits systems just for the members of the sample would be a very complicated process.

While a pilot project might theoretically pass the feasibility tests, if it did not model a genuine BI then it would be difficult to interpret its results as predictors of the behaviour of a nationwide BI.

e) *A single age group pilot project.*

This might be less of a problem. Take the four-year cohort of young adults aged 18 to 21 that is, between their eighteenth and twenty-second birthdays. The first thing to say is that the entire population of this age group could itself be regarded as a pilot project if a genuine BI were to be adopted. This age group generally has quite simple relationships with current tax and benefits systems, so running a tax system just for them would not be difficult if only minor changes were made. For instance, in the UK, all that would be required if we wished to remove the Income Tax Personal Allowance for everyone of the appropriate age would be for employers to apply the basic rate (BR) tax code. If the BI were to be set at or just below the level of means-tested unemployment benefits, then the majority of current claimants would no longer be claimants. And an ideal aspect of this particular starting-point is that it would be easy to extend the BI to subsequent age cohorts simply by allowing existing participants to retain their BIs and new tax arrangements beyond their twenty-second birthdays.

An important outcome of a pilot project of this nature would be an understanding of the effect of unconditional incomes on the behaviour of young adults. The Mincome experiment in Dauphin, Canada was not a BI pilot project, but the income mechanism tested exhibited similarities to a BI. Hence, the increase in educational engagement seen in that experiment might also be seen in a BI pilot project for that age group (Forget 2012). Furthermore, students' willingness to accrue significant debt in order to obtain an education suggests that an unconditional income would achieve increased engagement in education. The pilot project would be able to test these reasonable assumptions.

If a test of this pilot project were to be required it would not be difficult to organise. It would be relatively easy to pay a BI, and to make other adjustments, for everyone of the appropriate age living in a particular town. If the town were as representative as possible of the nationwide age cohort, then the only respect in which the pilot project would not be a genuine BI would be that it would be time-limited. Given the simplicity of the exercise, the project could be run for a number of years, with a new single year cohort joining, and a single age cohort automatically leaving the project every year as new participants reached their eighteenth birthdays and existing participants reached their twenty-second. Granted, nobody would be in the pilot project for more than four years: but there might soon be pressure to extend the project to higher age groups, and then to other communities. In this way the pilot project could soon become a nationwide BI for an increasing age range.

This plan for a test of a pilot project for an age group is financially very feasible; it would generate almost no losses at the point of implementation; it could be psychologically feasible – because the young adults and their parents and grandparents would approve; it could therefore be politically feasible; it would not be difficult to implement/engage the policy process; and behavioural feasibility could easily be tested after implementation.

Conclusions

We might summarise the feasibilities relating to the different implementation routes as in table 1:

Table 1: The feasibilities of five different Basic Income implementation routes

Implementation route	Replacement	Alongside	Single age group	Pilot project	Single age group pilot project
Financial: a) Fiscal	√	√	√	√	√
Financial: b) Household financial	x	√	√	√	√
Psychological	?	?	√	√	√
Behavioural	?	√	√	√	√
Administrative: a) scheme	√	√	√	√	√
Administrative: b) transition	?	√	√	√	√
Political	x	?	√	√	√
Policy process	x	?	√	?	√

We can see that implementing a BI for a single age group could be entirely feasible, and at least as feasible as carrying out a pilot project. This suggests that the easiest way to establish a BI would be its establishment for a single age group, and in the UK the four year cohort between the eighteenth and twenty-second birthdays would be a fairly obvious candidate. An important advantage of this age group is that it would be easy to extend their BIs beyond their twenty-second birthdays, thus rolling out a BI for the entire population.

As we have recognised, all of the implementation options that we have discussed relate to BI schemes designed to be implemented in the current context. A further question relates to how those initial first steps might then be followed by developments of the scheme. The first two options represent complete schemes for entire populations, and we can see how, following initial implementation, changes might be made during subsequent parliamentary terms: In relation to route b) we might want to see changes towards higher levels of BI. Route c) envisages the addition of further age groups following implementation for a single age group; route d) envisages subsequent roll-out to an entire population; and route e) again envisages subsequent roll-out to the entire age group and then to the entire population.

The detail of this article is, as we have stated, specific to the United Kingdom, but much of the content would

of course be equally relevant to other countries. The feasibility tests could be applied in any national or regional context, and even if the entire range of implementation methods discussed here might not be applicable, variations of them would likely be. The message that researchers and policymakers from any country would be able to take away from this article would be that, whatever their context, a careful study of all of the relevant feasibilities, and research on the feasibilities of a variety of different implementation methods, must be essential components of their country's ongoing debate on BI.

Australia

In the case of Australia, we can say more than this, because the current Australian social security system is remarkably similar to the system in the UK. It is predominantly based on means-tested benefits, and it is complex, unfair, arbitrary, harmful, and no longer relevant (Watts 2016: 75-81) in ways very similar to the complexity, unfairness, arbitrariness, harmfulness and irrelevance of the UK's current system. This suggests not only that the implementation methods for a BI scheme relevant to the UK might also be relevant to Australia, but also that their relative feasibilities might be similar when judged against the feasibility criteria discussed in this article.

And we can go further than this, because the income tax system in Australia is similar to that of the UK. The presence of a sizeable Personal Allowance of A\$18,200 per annum means that Australia would be able to fund a revenue-neutral initial BI scheme in much the same way as the UK, by reducing the Personal Allowance to zero and paying a BI of the same value as the additional tax that the reduction of the Personal Allowance would represent.

The consequence of these similarities is that if an initial BI scheme were to be successfully implemented in the UK, then Australia would be able to predict that a similar scheme could be successfully implemented there, and vice versa. The interesting question then becomes which country will get there first.

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Author

Dr. Malcolm Torry has been Director of the Citizen's Basic Income Trust since 2001 (and was Director before that between 1988 and 1992); he is a Visiting Senior Fellow in the Social Policy Department at the London School of Economics; and he is General Manager of BIEN, The Basic Income Earth Network. He is the author of *Money for Everyone: Why we need a Citizen's Income* (Policy Press, 2013), *101 Reasons for a Citizen's Income: Arguments for giving everyone some money* (Policy Press, 2015), *The Feasibility of Citizen's Income* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), *Citizen's Basic Income: A Christian social policy* (Darton, Longman and Todd, 2016), and *Why we need a Citizen's Basic Income: The desirability, feasibility and implementation of an unconditional income* (Policy Press, 2018: an almost completely rewritten second edition of *Money for Everyone*), and he is currently editing the *Palgrave International Handbook of Basic Income* (Palgrave Macmillan, forthcoming). Malcolm is a priest in the Church of England, and from 1980 to 2014 served in full-time posts in South London parishes. He has written extensively on the characteristics and management of religious and faith-based organisations.

How Labor Lost the Unlosable Election

BRONWYN STEVENS

This commentary examines the 2019 Australian election and considers factors impinging on the surprise outcome. It also canvasses some shortcomings in Australian democracy revealed during the progress of this election.

Introduction

The result of the May 2019 Australian election came as a shock to most observers. Only a minute swing was needed for a change of government. The opinion polls had unanimously forecast a Labor victory, and that was the result most Australians expected. The Coalition Government had recently been riven with conflict. Two Prime Ministers had been overthrown internally, the first then conducted a vendetta against his replacement, constantly destabilising the party. Turnbull, the latest victim, was then himself removed amidst public party in-fighting. The government had again failed to agree on an energy and climate change policy. Women MPs had publicly spoken against bullying in the Coalition. The long-serving and respected Deputy leader of the Liberal Party, Julie Bishop, didn't even receive support from her Western Australian colleagues for the leadership and retired from parliament reinforcing the contention that the Coalition parties had a problem with women. The Coalition took few policies to the election apart from cuts in the immigration and refugee intakes, legislation to protect religious freedom and immediate tax cuts for lower income earners that culminated with large cuts for the well-off in subsequent terms of parliament. The new leader, Scott Morrison, who defeated the initial challenger Peter Dutton, had 26 times rejected a royal commission into the banks and had been the hard man of stop-the-boats. Yet he recreated himself as everyman, an average suburban dad, in a stunning testament to his previous career in public relations. The Coalition won the 'unwinnable' election with a swing to them of 1.17% taking 51.53% of the final two-party-preferred vote.

The ALP

Labor meantime had remained united behind Bill Shorten despite his low popularity ratings. They took to the election a large suite of policies, including tax cuts for lower income earners, increases in spending on health, including support for expenses incurred by cancer patients and \$1000 of dental cover for pensioners and benefit holders. Substantial increases in education spending for pre-schoolers and TAFE were proposed.

University places would be uncapped. There would be more subsidies for child-care and the government would give financial support to increase the wages of child-care workers. Labor would support enshrining an indigenous Voice to Parliament in the constitution.

Other policies sought to make savings in expenditure to pay for these plans. These mainly aimed at removing subsidies benefiting the better-off. They included limiting the benefits of tax deductibility and concessions on capital gains tax available for negatively geared properties to new dwellings. They also proposed removing the franking credit tax rebate from non-tax payers. Pensioners would be exempted but it would adversely affect self-funded retirees. Labor also had more ambitious targets on climate change and for electric vehicles. These were wrapped up in the rhetoric of unity and equity. The ALP campaign compared its stability and progressive policies to the Coalition's disunity, its failure on climate change, its inequitable policies and support for the 'top end of town'.

Accepted wisdom overturned

This election result challenged many commonly expressed beliefs about elections and campaigning. Voters claim to prefer positive to negative campaigning but the anti-Labor campaign was dominated by negative advertising, fear campaigns and false claims. Labor's early attempts to run positive messages were overwhelmed. Accepted wisdom has been that disunity was electoral suicide but the ALP, united under the same leader for the previous two terms and presenting a united front, was defeated by a party that had ejected two leaders in the same period and whose in-fighting had become very public.

Another commonly bruited proposition assumes that voters will vote in their own economic self-interest but this election demonstrated that this is not always the case. The swing to the Coalition occurred in electorates where

education levels, employment levels and income were lower, the very electorates where more voters would benefit from Labor policies, while swings to the ALP occurred in electorates with higher levels of education, employment and income where more voters were likely to lose economically from Labor policies (see Evershed 2019).

It is also widely argued that governments and oppositions should put their policies and costings before the voters well in advance of election day but this election demonstrated the dangers of doing so. 'People are loss averse' (West 2019) and Labor was proposing policies that adversely affected wealthy and powerful sections of the electorate with the capacity to run well-funded campaigns. Mining magnate Clive Palmer put \$60 million into the anti-Labor campaign, real estate agents warned tenants that their rents would rise, the removal of franking credits became a wealth tax, an electric car target became a car tax.

Opinion polling before the election indicated that voters saw action on climate change as a priority, an area where Labor was stronger. Mining interests, symbolised by the quest for approval for the Adani mine and proposals for government support for a new coal-fired power station, were strong supporters of the government but so too were many mining workers and regional businesses dependent on mining jobs. This, combined with a feeling that city dwellers failed to understand the problems of regional Australia, led to swings away from Labor, particularly striking in areas dependent on coal mining.

The very extent and complexity of Labor's policy agenda challenged the capacity of voters, not normally engrossed in politics, and made it easier for opponents to create fear campaigns about Labor's actual policies and then extend them with 'fake' claims. (see West 2019).

The Polls

Australian media and political commentators rely heavily on the public opinion polls when assessing the progress of political parties. Party leaders rely on the polls when deciding on policies and when to call elections. In Australia, with compulsory voting, the polls in the election period have been a reasonably reliable forecast of election results. In 2016, of eight polls taken in the days before the election, six correctly predicted a close coalition victory, one a close ALP victory and one 50-50 (see Bove's analysis 2016). The final two-party preferred vote was 50.36% Coalition, ALP 49.64%. This time around, of 16 polls taken in the pre-election period, all gave a narrow victory to the ALP. In fact, all the polls for the previous two years showed Labor in front. Malcolm Turnbull justified his challenge to Abbott

because the Coalition lost thirty Newspolls in a row and then faced a challenge himself soon after he too reached this milestone. Australia is not alone in facing declining poll accuracy, making it even more hazardous to base major decisions on polls. In the UK, Theresa May was seventeen points ahead for the month before she called an election but barely won. The polling on Brexit consistently showed a three percent majority against leaving but the result was three percent in favour of leaving. Defenders of polls argue that they have remained within the margin of error of two to three percentage points, but it is who wins that most want to know (Swan 2018). In Australia the polls certainly got it wrong.

Several factors have undermined the veracity of the polls. The declining number of fixed phone lines and the lack of a directory of mobile phone numbers makes it difficult for polling companies to ensure a balanced sample. Less reliable methods such as random mobile calls and automated 'robo' calls are used with less ability to balance samples against the electorates' demographic. Many pollsters now rely on 'algorithms and statistical methods' to make a sample more representative but Uttinger argues that more transparency is needed regarding methodology and error rates and that 'the industry needs reform before it is completely discredited' (Uttinger 2019). Another factor suggested is that the lack of accurate sampling resulted in the excess representation of better educated voters who are more likely to respond to polls and at this election favoured Labor more than the general voting population (Beaumont 2019). With competition from social media reducing funds for the traditional media who commission polls the expense of rectifying such errors is likely to be prohibitive.

Another reason the failure of the polls has been so serious is the way the polls have been elevated in importance by the media with little emphasis on, or explanation regarding methodology and stated error rates. Gay Alcorn has argued that Australians are obsessed with polls and overinterpret and overuse them (Alcorn 2018). At this election the problem was not just error rates. The polls were all consistently close together as well as all wrong. Schmidt has questioned this consistency, arguing that as the chance of all these 16 polls coming to such a small spread of results is about 100 thousand to one without some manipulation, 'Whatever led the five polling companies to illegitimately converge on the same answer' requires a thorough investigation into their methodologies (Schmidt 2019). Labor pollster, John Uttinger, identified a pro-Labor bias in the published polls that are now 'discredited, distrusted, even despised'. He asks rhetorically, if Labor was actually level or behind – not in front – would that have affected political behaviour, 'especially if the leadership coups and prime ministerial changes were based on illusions' (Uttinger 2019) Other

questions should include whether Labor would have put forward such a complex and daring reform agenda if they had been trailing or barely equal in the polls and whether some voters would have changed their vote if the polls had been more accurate? Faith in polls has been eroded to such an extent that the *Age* and *Sydney Morning Herald* have announced that they are suspending polling at least until a thorough examination of what went wrong is undertaken (Maguire 2019).

Media Bias, Campaign Spending, Truth in Advertising and Fake News

Traditional media could be expected to provide some balance in its coverage but examinations of NewsCorp's metropolitan newspaper front pages and of its Sky 'after dark' programming found substantial anti-Labor and pro-Coalition bias. Respected current and former reporters from the *Australian* newspaper came forward to denounce the partisan nature of its coverage of this election campaign (Muller 2019, Alcorn 2019). Another issue thrown up in this election campaign has been the increased number of false and distorted claims put forward in broadcast advertisements and on social media. There are few limits on campaign spending at the federal level and no legislation requiring truth in political advertising in Australia. Robust debate has an important role to play in election campaigning and Labor has to some extent reaped the results of its own 'mediscare' campaign at the 2016 election.

At this election the serious challenges to democracy created by changing technology and social media foreshadowed at earlier elections, were fully exposed. The extent of patently false accusations put forward on social media by anonymous figures, by Clive Palmer's UAP advertising blitz, and by Coalition advertisements have led to renewed demands for truth in political advertising legislation. 'Death tax' and 'car tax' claims were initiated on social media but spread in advertisements authorised by Coalition figures (Knaus and Evershed 2019). Most notably, there was the infamous ad showing shadow ministers uttering the words 'death tax' while they were actually denying its existence. Professor AJ Brown claims that reform is now increasingly needed as 'the opportunities for manipulation were now too great not to act' and existing rules against false and deceptive advertising in commerce could be extended and enforced (Brown cited by Knaus and Evershed 2019).

Of over 500 complaints to the Australian Electoral Commission, 87 resulted in action but none in prosecution because the AEC has no power to deal with truth in advertising, only misleading conduct relating to the process of voting. Even the notices in AEC colour and style placed outside polling booths in Chisholm were not found to be in contravention of the narrow

requirements of the Electoral Act because they were authorised (Knaus and Karp 2019). While this has not satisfied all candidates and may face a court challenge, it demonstrates the total inadequacy of electoral law in this area. There has been consensus among political parties and the AEC that such legislation would be hard to enforce and may be struck down by the High Court. However, Sawyer noted that after initially rejecting a blanket ban on political advertising in *Australian Capital Television Pty Ltd v the Commonwealth*, the High Court has since accepted some limitations on freedom of speech, such as a ban on donations from property developers, to ensure the integrity of the political system (Sawyer 2019).

The reasons for Labor's defeat will be analysed extensively over the coming months but some of the lessons that will be learned are unlikely to enhance democracy. It is hard to stop false advertising and messaging; negative advertising works and is likely to become even more prevalent. Enunciating a substantial electoral agenda undercuts clarity, and identifying savings provokes powerful opponents to misrepresent policies that disadvantage them. Long term policies for the public good are easy to distort and often hard to sell. Voters hoping for an informed and honest campaign appear likely to be disappointed.

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Author

Bronwyn Stevens has taught Australian politics and international relations for some years concluding at the University of the Sunshine Coast. She has published in books, chapters and articles on Australian politics and on elections.

Chaos

There is a niggle in my left knee.
 Pinpricks. The kettle has a hushed rattle.
 It will come to boil in a bit. There are three messages on my phone, that
 I haven't responded to yet.

Remote in hand, I
 remain undecided about a TV channel to watch.

Damn! It's those pinpricks, again. In my knee.

The neighbour's dog has been barking, for a while.
 It has started to annoy me now. The washing machine rumbles away
 in the laundry. Spin-dry cycle.

Pinpricks in my knee. Yet again.

My phone buzzes. I look for it. Under the cushions.
 Beneath the couch.
 Can't spot it. I drop the TV remote, looking for my phone.

Why is that dog still barking?

The kettle goes feral that very moment.
 I switch it off and pour myself a cuppa. I now have four messages on my phone.
 I must pay that bill too, pinned under the fridge magnet we got from Paris.
 The dog is silent now.

My knee still hurts though.

Smeared in chaos, I hobble.
 From one moment, to the next one.

SANAM SHARMA,
 MELBOURNE, VIC.

We Need to Talk: Lessons from 18 May 2019

RICHARD HIL

... even in the darkest of times we have the right to expect some illumination, and that such illumination may well come less from theories and concepts than from the uncertain, flickering, and often weak light that some men and women, in their lives and their works, will kindle under almost all circumstances – Hannah Arendt

Taking stock

Great expectations. Shock. Deflation. Anger. Acceptance (of sorts). Renewed determination to act.

These are not quite the stages of grief outlined by Kubler-Ross, but perhaps not far off.

I've spent the past few days listening to people sound off about the election: the role of Palmer, Hanson, Jones, Murdoch, etc., lies and more damn lies, the 'tax' scare, the over-cooked ALP program, the 'presidential' nature of the campaign, an unpopular opposition leader, the 'revolt' by blue collar workers, and so on.

In some ways, the *post mortem* on 18 May has been more exhaustive (and exhausting) than the election campaign itself. Everyone has an opinion about what went wrong, or right (depending on where you stand). Some have alluded to the inherent conservatism of the Australian people, or that gradualism rather than radical change is the preferred pace of change, or that Australians run a mile if their hip pockets are under threat. More caustic observations have been made about the inward looking, selfish and greedy nature of the electorate, or sections thereof. This is hurtful, inaccurate and even insulting. When delivered from cashed-up city slickers it comes across as rather feudalistic – the peasants are revolting – and totally lacking in empathy and understanding. So, let's not go there.

The ALP leadership of course has its own take on the electoral shambles. Newly installed leader, Anthony Albanese ('Albo') noted that one of his first acts as Labor leader would be to head straight to the deep north to listen to the electorate that vanquished his party, which is interesting when you think about it, because that would seem to be the thing to have done *prior* to the Saturday

wipe-out, yes? Obviously, when it comes to the ALP's campaign strategy, something went terribly wrong. The message, so we're told, simply didn't 'cut through', or there wasn't 'enough time' to explain policy nuances, or messages were diluted and/or misrepresented by political opponents and sinister media outlets.

While we're in danger of deconstructing 18 May to death, the bald figures tell us that in terms of seats won, the election delivered majority government for the Coalition, as well as a more pro-conservative crossbench and senate. Prime Minister Scott Morrison has been unquestionably emboldened and is now free of the rancour and discord created by former prime ministers on the backbench.

If you're on the progressive left, none of this bodes well. The confidence that bloomed after years of positive poll results for the ALP, the desire on the part of the electorate to see action on climate change and wage growth, all mattered little in the end. The electorate was spooked by talk of taxes and what many in North Queensland saw as threats to job security. The defeat was, for the left at least, the greatest whiplash moment since federation, a reminder that what occurred in the US and Britain in 2016 was not confined to those countries. We're seeing similar ructions across Europe and in other parts of the world, notably Brazil. Trump's shadow looms large over the recent election, as does the conductor's baton held aloft by a certain Steve Bannon.

The Arc of History

This, I would suggest, is not a time for recriminations, insults and the Abbott-like disease of relentless negativity. Not long after 18 May I tried to rally the troops in Mullumbimby in the Greens/Labor Byron Shire in northern NSW. A subdued crowd came to listen to former senator

and great Australian Margaret Reynolds speak about the ABC (she's now National President of the Friends of the ABC) who had seen this kind of thing before. Despair, she suggested, was understandable but not a great long-term response. We have to dust-off, regroup, reflect, think, and offer up a compelling story of change – one that is shared with others in the context of their everyday lives. It should not be a story that is imposed. More on that later.

In introducing Margaret, I borrowed some words from Barack Obama about the 'long arc of history', and how 18 May was a harrowing blip. Inwardly, I wanted to avoid the teleological error of suggesting that we're on some inevitable path to nirvana, but hey, the occasion called for a modicum of encouragement. I talked about the need to rebuild relationships with people and communities, to open up conversational channels, and, above all, to avoid preaching and proselytising. I referred to election day as the 'whiplash moment': a moment that suddenly jerked the progressive left back to some sort of homeostasis, away from the semi-delusional euphoria we all seemed to be experiencing. I quoted the words of Afro-American writer Maya Angelou: 'You may encounter many defeats, but you must not be defeated. In fact, it may be necessary to encounter the defeats, so you can know who you are, what you can rise from, how you can still come out of it'.

Admittedly, these words sounded, a bit like being told that being beaten up is character building. The mood required something much more inspirational, but I guess we were all in the same state. Looking back, I think that we on the progressive left of politics were too convinced of the inherent rationality of our own story, forgetting that others had their own narratives created through lived circumstance. Sure, there is growing concern over climate change and many people are annoyed by income inequality and precarious employment. But clearly, that wasn't enough. If people are to be persuaded then they need to be in the tent, not out of it. And they certainly don't need to be spoken at, but with. They need to be listened to, not cajoled or hounded. Being told what's good for you has never been all that alluring. History is full of examples where elites claiming to represent the views of 'the people' have imposed their views in the name of 'democracy'. It's the road to repression and the gulags. If we haven't learnt the lesson already, then we need to realise that a new relational politics is necessary – a politics of listening grounded in principles of participatory and deliberative democracy.

A Compelling Story

The thing is, those of us on the progressive left really *do* have a compelling story to tell. As George Monbiot observes in *Out of the Wreckage*, humans are at their best when they share and cooperate, not when they

engage in cut-throat competition. They are at their most vulnerable, and are prey to demagogues and the like, when they are living apart in states of fear and anxiety. We are also at our best when we offer our services to others, when we give of ourselves, and when we display kindness, care and compassion. As social creatures, we seek the company of others; we derive spiritual and emotional nourishment through living in and through mutually supportive relationships. This is good for health and wellbeing. The science tells us such. We live longer in such circumstances and are less prone to illness. Our story also foreshadows a world of regeneration – a deep respect for the web of life of which we are a part, and a deep commitment to the rights of all peoples and the central importance of social justice as a benchmark for a decent and respectful society. This is the social contract we should be promoting: a contract that respects all peoples, living creatures and the environment around us.

But in telling this story of a richer, more colourful and interesting life, we have to bear in mind that those in the tent need to *feel* part of that story, and they will only do so once they have been listened to and had their thoughts, life experiences and aspirations acknowledged. If for example, we want to transition from coal to clean energy, we need to argue this on the basis of people's desire for health and security. They need to be assured that a transitional plan will support them into new occupations, and that they will be looked after financially in the interim. Interestingly, the vast majority of people now take climate change very seriously, but what they also want is to feel safe and secure as they experience occupational change. The latter has to be talked up. People need to feel it to be true. They need to feel heard and supported.

Even though the election was a major jolt, the fact is that fundamental change is afoot. Had you polled people even five years ago, climate change was of less importance than say the economy and health. But the times have changed – the ALP strategists simply forgot to read the right script.

Purposeful Dialogue

In reflecting on how we might build a more inclusive movement for fundamental change, one that embraces many of those with whom we might disagree, some adjustments to our engagement practices may be necessary. In a recent issue of *Arena Magazine*, Kristen Lyons and I observed the following: 'Deep listening', we argued:

does not mean simply uncritically absorbing what is said. There comes a point when an alternative view has to be put, when an idea is gently questioned, or when the lived experience of someone being

othered is humanised through storytelling and other narrational techniques. Yet the act of listening in itself reflects an attitude of respect rather than disdain, which in turn lays the foundation for purposeful dialogue.

We added:

In many ways, therefore, building respectful relationships in good faith around the pursuit of common purpose is a powerful counter to what Anne Manne refers to as the 'new narcissism'. But it is even more vital in these times of political polarisation, the 'democracy recession' and nationalist populism. It begins, as Citizens UK activist Mathew Bolotin observes, by building relationships with people around their common concerns and aspirations, and listening to them with respectful intent. This might not always work, and the messenger may become the issue rather than the message, but it's worth trying. While entrenched values and beliefs are hard to shift, self-interest

and species survival may offer the cracks through which the light comes in. This is certainly the case when it comes to anthropogenic climate change, inequality and job insecurity. People are ready to have purposeful conversations about the worlds in which they live ...

Therefore, how we talk, with whom and what communicative ways, really do matter. Megaphonic diatribes, bellowing from the ideological pulpit and a crude insistence on the right line may produce the very opposite to what is intended. Relationship building requires a much more thoughtful and inclusive approach.

Author

Richard Hil is an Adjunct Professor at Griffith University in the School of Human Services and Social Work and has taught at several Australian universities. He is also Convenor, Ngara Institute. He has published academic articles. His books including *Whackademia* and *Selling Students Short*.

YOU ARE YOURSELF THE ANIMAL WE HUNT

after Rumi

too full to talk about the world, you
are like the ground, entirely thorn, tasting your
self through my eyes, night-glints, the astonished rose

too full to talk about the spoken-word, you are the cold
and dark of a cave, the animal we hunt, a covering
for the self, no need to touch the opening if

I became empty, separated myself, that emptiness
becomes what we most want, ocean-light, the opening
too full, no need to talk to touch the world

astonished

*MAGS WEBSTER,
SALTER POINT, WA.*

Politics as Cruelty: Asylum seekers, Australian Government Policy and the 2019 federal election

GRAHAM MADDOX

In this commentary the author examines Australian Government policy towards refugees and relates this to the Morrison Government's opening of the Christmas Island Detention Centre just before the 2019 election.

Just as quickly as it was raised as a scare campaign by the Coalition Government against Labor in the 2019 federal election, the issue of asylum seekers fizzled as an issue. Clearly the government feared that the electorate was becoming immune to the fear of penetration of our 'sovereign borders'. Yet the government was convinced that John Howard's success at arousing hostility against 'boat people' would again strike a chord with the public. Howard was paraded as the elder-statesman to give substance to the Liberal 2019 campaign – an incredible choice, given the 'crimes' of Howard's prime-ministership, including the illegal, immoral and destructive entry into the Iraq War (Wilkie 2004).

John Howard, facing re-election in November 2001, shortly after the September 11 terrorist attacks on the United States, was able to exploit fear of the outsider by denigrating boat people as potential terrorists. In August an overcrowded fishing boat, the *Palapa 1*, carrying over four hundred asylum seekers, foundered in international waters north of Christmas Island. Alerted to the emergency, Australian authorities tried to persuade Indonesia to rescue the boat. Instead, the captain of the Norwegian vessel, *Tampa*, Arne Rinnan, responded to Australia's emergency call and rescued the asylum seekers. He was then refused permission to enter Australian waters, which he was perfectly entitled, if not obliged, to do since international law prescribed that rescuers land their passengers on the nearest available territory. Rinnan was threatened by the Australian Government with prosecution as a people smuggler. The government ordered the SAS to board the *Tampa* and remove the asylum seekers to Nauru. Australian soldiers also interrupted the crew's efforts to bring first aid to the many sick on board the rescue vessel (Marr and Wilkinson 2003; cf. Brennan 2003).

In October of the same year a boat designated the 'Suspected Illegal Entry Vessel IV', the *Olong*, was

harassed by an Australian naval ship, which tried to force the refugee boat to heave-to by firing shots across its bows. The passengers were kitted with life jackets, and some on the Australian vessel suspected an impending threat to scuttle the boat and force the rescue of the refugees. They in turn may well have thought that they were about to be sunk by Australian shells. When the Australians saw refugees handing children amongst themselves, some jumped to the conclusion that they were preparing to throw their children overboard. This false assumption was relayed to government authorities in Canberra, who transmitted the story as proof that the asylum-seekers were uncivilised and ruthless. John Howard did not want 'people like that' coming to Australia. Under Howard, 'asylum seekers were routinely demonised as terrorists, drug dealers, carriers of disease, and even as deliberately harmful to their own children' (MacCallum 2019). There were racist undertones in Howard's attitudes to the asylum seekers, since so many of them were from the Middle East, while there was a rising fear in the community, stirred up by right-wing extremists, of 'infiltration' by Muslims. The message from the navy may have been garbled, and soon it was evident that it had all been a mistake. Yet Howard continued to recite the theme of these wicked child-killers. Was there a conspiracy to keep the prime minister uninformed about the truth? (Weller 2002). Three years later, just before the 2004 election, it was revealed that a public servant, Mike Scafton, had indeed informed Howard that the report was wrong (Walters 2004), yet Howard continued to use it to condemn the boat people, bravely declaring that he would not be 'intimidated' by them!

Howard's defence minister, Peter Reith, had made the most of hinting that there might be terrorists among the asylum seekers. Offensive though that was, the Howard Government in addition spared no effort in trying to destroy the credibility of the boat-people. They were continually

called 'illegals', although this was entirely false. The United Nations Convention on Human Rights was ratified by the Australian Government in 1954. Article 31 obliges the government to receive people seeking asylum, and it is the people who turn them away that are the 'illegals'. Yet expediency was allowed to override international law.

The indefinite detention in harrowing concentration camps was given impetus by Labor's Kevin Rudd declaring that no asylum seeker arriving by boat would ever be resettled in Australia. Rudd tested his religious credibility with his public hope that people smugglers would rot in hell. What price, then, Oscar Schindler or Dietrich Bonhoeffer, whom Rudd had publicly eulogised (Rudd 2006)? Rudd's excesses paved a smooth path for the Coalition Government's extreme cruelty.

As the immigration minister, Scott Morrison shrouded the operation of his vaunted 'border force' in secrecy, declaring that he would never comment on 'on water' matters, as though there was something sinister about the water. His avowed intent was to prevent people smugglers discovering how the force manoeuvred, but a wider concern was to resist the thirst for knowledge of the state of affairs among Australian citizens.

Then there was the state of the concentration camps set up on Manus Island in Papua-New Guinea and on Nauru. In a careful and well documented account, Madeleine Gleeson unveiled the secret miseries of asylum seekers in Australian custody (Gleeson 2016). Conditions in the camps were miserable under Rudd, despite the good intentions of his immigration minister, Tony Burke, who publicly showed compassion for asylum seekers. Nevertheless, an employee of the surveillance contractor, Rod St John, reported: 'Words can't really describe it. I have never seen human beings so destitute, so helpless and so hopeless before ... In Australia the facility [on Manus] couldn't serve as a dog kennel. The owners would be jailed' (Gleeson 2016: 112).

Under Scott Morrison as immigration minister things got quite out of hand on Manus Island. The prison camp was poorly protected, and ill-equipped to deal with the desperation of men who had lost all hope in a future. Some demonstrated their distress with an organised protest. The unrest provoked the PNG police mobile squad, which raided the camp by pushing down a fence and began shooting and beating all whom they encountered inside the camp. This included men who had never taken part in the demonstration, and who sought protection under beds and any hiding place they could find. They were dragged out and beaten mercilessly. One of them was killed.

During the riot, an innocent Iranian young man, Reza Barati, was murdered by a rock smashed into his head. The inadequacy of the protection at Manus is only half the story regarding minister Morrison. He reported the riot to the Australian people – falsely: no fences had been pulled down, no PNG people were inside the camp, only one or two shots were fired. Reza Barati's death was stated as a 'tragedy', but he himself was to blame for it. Morrison announced that:

where people decided to protest in a very violent way and to take themselves outside the centre and place themselves at great risk ... clearly the outcome where someone has absconded, gone outside the safety of that facility and put themselves at risk, resulting in such a tragic outcome is terrible (Gleeson 2016: 181-183).

However, Reza Barati was 'hacked to death while trying to flee to the safety of his accommodation' (Keane 2019). Typically, Morrison blamed 'refugee advocates', whose 'rumours and wild stories' turned out to be more accurate than the minister's bluster, while his cavalier disregard for the truth presaged his conduct of the 2019 election campaign.

In the 2019 campaign, the Coalition tried to depict asylum seekers as almost sub-human. Before the issue was dropped as a dud, Morrison sought to undermine the Labor opposition for giving its support to a private member's amendment, sponsored by the short-term Independent Kerryn Phelps requiring the immigration department to bring asylum seekers, assessed by doctors to be in need of treatment, to Australian facilities. The then minority government's frenzied response was to reopen the closed Christmas Island detention centre to receive the 'flood' of refugees who would be removed from the detention centres, even though the administrator of the island said it had no adequate facilities for medical care, and patients would have to be sent to the Australian mainland anyway. Worse still, Labor was 'sending a message' to people smugglers to open up their trade again. A frantic home affairs minister, Peter Dutton, departed radically from making any sense 'when the ailing detainees are called not just rapists, murderers and paedophiles but also convicted rapists, murderers and paedophiles. If they have been convicted, they should presumably be in jail; and if they have been released, and the authorities know about it, their status would surely have been noted and recorded.' (MacCallum 2019).

Reopening Christmas Island was intended to be a decisive propaganda message; not a single refugee was transferred to the island, but the prime minister made a

big point of visiting the reopened facility to emphasise its importance to his electoral campaign.

It subsequently [symbolically?] housed a shipload of Sri Lankan refugees before they were summarily sent home.) As former Greens senator Scott Ludlum declared, 'Christmas Island's role in detention policy was as a stage set. In early March the prime minister flew a media cohort to the facility, a 10,000km round trip from Canberra. He got what he wanted: footage of him inspecting gleaming palisade fences and scrolls of razor wire, and some soundbites from a vacuous press conference. Then everyone returned to Australia. 'We paid \$180 million for Scott Morrison to have a press conference on Christmas Island' (Ludlum 2019).

The detention centre on Manus Island was then declared illegal by the PNG courts as a violation of human rights, and was officially closed at the end of 2016, yet to this day, the asylum seekers, who have to gain permission to leave the island, are still prisoners with no release date. In both Manus Island and Nauru 'brutality and torture' are still the daily routine for asylum seekers (Barnes 2019). It remains a puzzle why leading politicians, who boast that their country is the greatest place in the world, should allow innocent people subject to its authority to be treated with such systematic cruelty. As Waleed Aly wrote after the death of Reza Barati, 'We don't get to be outraged because this violence, with its brutal deadly consequences, is inherent. It is the very logic of our asylum seeker policy ... to create horror' (Aly 2014). Howard, Rudd, Abbott and Morrison are all public Christians, and yet their policy of cruelty is distinctly un-Christian. With the first three we may despair of an expediency that paves the way to power. With Morrison's Pentecostalism, there is no hope for those who aren't 'saved' – i.e. 'born again Christians'; they might as well be consigned to a living hell right now. God prospers his own; 'there is no sense in Pentecostal economics of a Jesus Christ who was on the side of the poor and the oppressed'. His theology 'aligns perfectly with the neo-liberal economic views espoused by Morrison. The consequence is that it becomes a God-given task to liberate people from reliance on the welfare state' (Almond 2019).

When the state is officially party to entrenched injustice, there is little prospect of attaining a just society under Morrison, despite the miracle of his win.

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Author

Graham Maddox is a distinguished Australian political scientist. He taught for many years at the University of New England and is the author of many books and articles on Australian politics.

noisy green fruit

noisy green fruit
dingle-dangle from the highest branch
– one claw each –

drop together
squabbling
half a wing-

beat from grass littered
with hot pink shreds
ripped and torn

for fun and the nectar
hidden sweet
deep in the nub of the bloom

squawk back
to the peak
of the next blossoming tree

JENNY BLACKFORD,
NEWCASTLE, NSW.

Norm-based Strategies for Political and Social Change: An analysis of migrant justice advocacy

MELISSA SCHNYDER

This article examines issues surrounding migrant justice to illustrate how civil society organisations (CSOs) integrate social norms into their advocacy work in order to bring about social and political change. Drawing on specific examples, it explores how CSOs use two strategies – normative reframing and normative innovation – to dismantle problematic existing social norms and advance alternative norms in their place. Because deliberate efforts to advance normative change can ultimately lead to institutional reform, the analysis is relevant to broader CSO efforts to tackle seemingly intractable problems.

Introduction

This article examines issues surrounding migrant justice to illustrate how civil society organisations (CSOs) integrate social norms into their advocacy strategies in order to bring about social and political change. Highlighting specific case examples from an analysis of CSO documents, writings, and discourse, the article explores how CSOs attempt to ‘foreground’ and dismantle problematic existing social norms that undergird formal and informal institutions. In addition, it assesses how CSOs use two specific strategies – normative reframing and normative innovation – to advance alternative norms in their place.

Because norms play a role in both formal and informal institutions, deliberate efforts to advance normative change are significant in that they can lead to institutional reform (Raymond and Weldon 2013: 2) and can advance CSO efforts to tackle seemingly intractable problems (Raymond et al. 2014: 204). Past research has shown this to be the case for advocacy in several issue areas including biofuels (Raymond and Delshad 2016: 519) and climate change (Raymond et al. 2014: 204), women’s rights (Raymond and Weldon 2013: 3; Raymond et al. 2014: 206; Jewkes et al. 2015: 1580; Weldon and Raymond 2013: 1-2), and child marriage (Shawki 2015: 60). The conclusions of this research thus potentially hold relevance to civil society advocacy in a range of other issue areas.

The article proceeds in several sections. First, a brief contextual section provides background and situates migrant justice advocacy into a broader social and political context. Next, the theoretical framework on norm-

based strategies for change is presented and described. Following this, the article explains the concept of migrant justice and describes some of the associated issues with an eye toward detailing specific social and political problems. The ensuing section presents an analysis of how the strategies of normative reframing and normative innovation are evident as advocacy tools in the migrant justice movement. The concluding section summarises the key points and presents avenues for future research.

Advocacy Context

The issue of migrant justice is situated within a broader social and institutional context that informs advocacy. For instance, the issue of how (and whether) migration relates to border security has received much attention in the wake of protracted conflicts in Syria, Afghanistan, and Iraq. Far-right extremist and nationalist political parties in many Western democracies have presented migration as a destabilising force, depicting borders as porous and insecure, with ‘waves’ of migrants associated with criminal activity and even terrorism (Financial Times 5 June 2018: n.p.; see also Davis and Deole 2017: 10). Moreover, the recent refugee crisis in the European Union (EU) has also brought the issue of migration into sharper public view, as the media presents stories and images of migrants overcrowding into small vessels in dangerous attempts to cross the Mediterranean to reach its shores (e.g., The Independent 9 January 2018: n.p.; CNN 4 July 2018: n.p.). Those attempting to enter stable democratic countries include refugees fleeing war, persecution, and conflict in their homelands, as well as economic migrants seeking to improve their situation through migration.

At the international level, there is no shortage of legal instruments 'pertaining to the human rights of migrants and the rights of migrant workers, and the protection of refugees as well as instruments designed to combat migrant smuggling and human trafficking' (United Nations 2013: 19). For example, refugees hold rights under the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, and the 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees. In addition, migrant workers' claim to rights traces to the 1949 ILO Convention concerning Migration for Employment, the 1975 ILO Convention concerning Migrations in Abusive Conditions and the Promotion of Equality of Opportunity and Treatment of Migrant Workers, the 1990 International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, and the 2011 ILO Convention concerning Decent Work for Domestic Workers. Relatedly, smuggling and trafficking of persons is addressed in the 2000 Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children; and the 2000 Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air. Despite the existence of these international-level instruments, domestic-level norms increasingly appear to favour restrictions on economic migration and have become less favourable to refugee protection in many countries, including many of the world's liberal democracies. This clash of international- and domestic-level norms and the lack of political will in many democracies to welcome migrants and refugees has mobilised many civil society organizations to take action and work to create normative change at the domestic level. As the next section explains, these grassroots efforts can be a significant catalyst for change.

Norm-Based Strategies for Change to Address Intractable Problems

Recent research has identified two norm-based strategies that advocates have successfully used to produce institutional change in other policy sectors, even in the face of strong opposition and vested interests: normative reframing and normative innovation (Raymond et al. 2014: 197; see also Raymond and Weldon 2013: 2-3). In each case, the goal is to change the 'standard of appropriate behavior' (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998: 891) and thereby usher in change to formal and informal institutions.

Normative reframing involves efforts to reconceptualise an issue in terms of an alternative norm that implies different behaviours or policies than the status quo (Raymond and Weldon 2013: 2-3). Here, advocates for social change highlight the poor 'fit' between the status quo norm and the issue at hand, and seek to recast the issue in terms of a different norm that can be more appropriately applied (Raymond et al. 2014: 200). Advocates typically seek to reframe an issue in terms of the strongest possible applicable norm(s) – those norms that enjoy wide

acceptance and broad support – in order to lend legitimacy to the newly applied norm and render it difficult to infringe upon (Raymond et al. 2014: 200). Human rights norms are good examples of strong norms in that they are widely accepted and practiced. For instance, advocates campaigning for food security often reframed the issue of hunger as one concerning fundamental human rights (Raymond and Weldon 2013: 3).

The strategy of normative innovation involves the outright rejection of an undesirable norm that is viewed as fundamentally illegitimate, which is then replaced by a new norm that promotes desired behaviours. Rather than proposing a different norm that may be a better fit to the issue (as with normative reframing), normative innovation involves the creation of an entirely new norm (Raymond et al. 2014: 201). In this case, those promoting social change must produce and promote a new norm consistent with their goals (Raymond and Weldon 2013: 3). As Raymond et al. (2014: 202) observe, 'Unless we contend that the "stock" of extant norms is constant, it seems clear that the inventory of norms must change over time to include some new rules of behavior. New norms, as new standards of behavior, also often require the creation of new categories and concepts, suggesting that they are quite different from the process of simply applying an alternative norm to a new situation'. Thus, the creation of new categories and concepts often goes hand-in-hand with efforts to create a new norm.

Each of the above strategies begins with efforts to weaken a status quo norm – a process known as 'foregrounding' (Raymond et al. 2014: 200). Here, advocates call into question an undesirable norm and attempt to challenge it. The weakening of a status quo norm then paves the way for advocates to create change through normative reframing and/or normative innovation.

These two norm-based strategies can be particularly effective in cases where strong vested interests or customary practices serve to block reform (Raymond et al. 2014: 198). As others have noted, 'Policies mandating new actions related to food security, environmental conservation, or violence against women may remain ineffective when in conflict with strongly established norms related to gender and family roles, social status, and consumption' (Raymond and Weldon 2013: 2). In other words, there are instances in which the creation of formal laws is not enough to produce social change. In these cases, 'equal or greater attention to informal rules of behavior is often required' (Raymond and Weldon 2013: 4). In the case of migrant justice, which involves migrant and refugee rights, international instruments pertaining to the protection of migrants and refugees are sometimes at odds with national policies, customs, or practices,

especially as extremist and nationalist movements advance in many of the world's liberal democracies.

Migrant Justice

The movement for migrant justice touches upon many categories of migrants, including economic migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers, and undocumented persons. The main issues of concern involve social problems and policies that impact and perpetuate the marginalisation and exclusion of migrant communities. The movement views this marginalization as driven by factors such as restrictive immigration laws and border controls; systems of detention and deportation; the exploitation of economic migrants; and economic, environmental, and military forces that result in the displacement of people (Picker 2015: n.p.). The International Organization for Migration (IOM) estimates that, globally, there are 244 million international migrants, representing 3.3% of the world's population, and trends over time indicate that migration is on the rise (IOM 2017: 13). The primary reason for migration is work, with many opting to migrate to high-income countries that offer better economic opportunities (International Labour Organization 2018: 27; see also IOM 2017: 29). Yet the data also indicate that global displacement is at a record high, resulting in over 40 million internally displaced people and more than 22 million refugees (IOM 2017: 32-33). Globally, significant numbers of people are affected by issues that pertain to migrant justice.

Economic migrants, refugees, and undocumented migrants often face issues of exclusion and marginalisation in the host country. For example, the increasing militarization of border policing and immigration control often perpetuate dynamics of inclusion and exclusion between citizens and non-citizens (Vaughan-Williams 2015: 3-4). The abuse that has been documented in detention centres can have a disproportionately negative impact on women and children migrants, with reports of rape of female detainees, inadequate or improper health care, and negative psychological effects of the detention experience on children (Lawston and Escobar 2009: 1). Deportation and the detention of migrants, including unaccompanied migrant children, are considered by some to represent acts of state repression and violence (Chacón and Davis 2006: 201-203). In general, 'many migrants, some after decades of settlement, suffer economic and social disadvantages, are excluded from civic and political participation and face discrimination, racism and xenophobia' (Rudiger and Spencer 2003: 3), with the undocumented particularly vulnerable to discrimination, exploitation, and marginalization (United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner 2018: n.p.). Because of their marginalisation, migrants represent easy targets for scape-goating by far-right

political parties, which have gained support in some of the world's most liberal democracies (Rudiger and Spencer 2003: 3). Stricter migration policies and the tightening of asylum procedures in democratic countries 'has led to a boom of smuggling in human beings and is exposing refugees and migrants to abuse and exploitation' (Red Cross EU Office 2017: n.p.).

The acts and effects of repression and marginalization serve to decrease human security and entail a significant violation of a number of human rights, including a denial of civil and political rights such as a lack of due process, arbitrary detention, and torture, as well as social, economic, and cultural rights including the right to education, housing, and health (United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner 2018: n.p.). Such human rights violations thus have far-reaching implications due to the breadth of areas they involve. Although international rights instruments pertaining to migration and asylum formally exist, 'a lack of human rights-based migration governance at the global, regional and national levels is leading to the routine violation of migrants' rights in transit, at international borders, and in the countries they migrate to' (United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner 2018: n.p.). In short, against a backdrop of formal international institutions designed to protect and ensure the rights of migrants, informal rules and norms have developed at the national and societal levels that tolerate and sometimes perpetuate the exploitation and marginalisation of migrants of all types. The following section analyses how CSOs apply the strategies of normative reframing and normative innovation in advocating for migrant justice.

Normative Reframing: Human Rights

How advocates use normative reframing to link issues pertaining to migrants, refugees, and asylum-seekers to broader human rights issues can be illustrated through several examples. To begin, Forum Réfugiés-Cosi is a France-based organisation whose mandate includes 'working for the reception of refugees, the defence of the right of asylum and the promotion of the rule of law'.¹ Before applying human rights framing, this CSO first draws attention to and critiques norms that reinforce discrimination against asylum-seekers in particular, and in so doing 'fights against discrimination that asylum seekers, refugees and other foreigners could be the object of' (Forum Réfugiés-Cosi 2018a: 9). In addition, while the organisation does not denounce or reject the concept of border security per se, it does point out that 'European asylum and immigration policy cannot be aimed solely at strengthening borders to curb arrivals. In a context where forced population displacements and international protection needs have never been greater in the world, closing the borders has the effect of modifying migration

routes and encouraging migrants and refugees to take more risk, with more shipwrecks and deaths at sea' (Forum Réfugiés-Cosi 2018b: n.p.). Other CSOs echo this theme, such as Pro Asyl in Germany, in stating that 'We are working to change the EU's policy of closing its external borders' (Pro Asyl 2019a: n.p.), and France Terre d'Asile, which also critiques the emerging norm of shifting responsibility away from the EU and onto third parties in explaining that 'the EU's external migration policy cannot be synonymous with abandoning our own responsibilities' (France Terre d'Asile 2019: n.p.). Together, these examples illustrate the practice of foregrounding as CSOs critique existing norms that they do not see as aligning with the issue at hand.

After foregrounding undesirable norms, CSOs use human rights norms as a way to reframe the issue. In its publications and advocacy work, for example, Forum Réfugiés-Cosi emphasises the different human rights dimensions of issues that impact upon migrants and refugees. It advocates in favour of 'a permanent mechanism which guarantees respect for the fundamental rights of migrants and refugees, including access to a procedure that complies with European and international law and allows the examination of protection needs in respect of asylum' (Forum Réfugiés-Cosi 2018b: n.p.). Suggestive of states that have tightened restrictions to prevent refugees from entering, this CSO explains that 'the development of legal and safe routes to the territory of the EU and its Member States should not prevent people who are demonstrating their intention to seek asylum at European borders from having their application registered and processed in full respect of the fundamental guarantees attached to the right of asylum' (Forum Réfugiés-Cosi 2018c: n.p.). Through its rights-based discourse, the CSO is attempting to define migration and asylum in terms of well-established and widely-supported human rights norms – norms whose strength can advance work toward migrant justice. Human rights framing permeates its efforts across different governance levels, as the group states that 'Forum Réfugiés-Cosi also intervenes in France and Europe to relay information on the human rights situation and to advocate with the institutions concerned (local authorities, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union, etc.)' (Forum Réfugiés-Cosi 2018d: n.p.). Such language illustrates efforts to highlight the human rights framing of these issues within different institutional arenas.

Many other CSOs commonly use human rights norms to reframe the issue of migration. Pro Asyl, for instance, as 'an independent voice raised for human rights and refugee protection in Germany and Europe' (Pro Asyl 2019b: n.p.), explicitly links migrant justice to human rights. Human rights framing is consistently promoted in its descriptions of campaign and project findings. For

example, it explains that 'the human rights violations that we have uncovered...range from arbitrary mass detentions and severe violence from police and border guards to the illegal refoulement (turning-away) of those needing protection' (Pro Asyl 2019a: n.p.). Further, in the context of an aid project in Greece, Pro Asyl documented 'push-backs in Greek-Turkish border areas. By physically pushing boats back, the Greek coastguard was violating human rights – and also using brute force' (Pro Asyl 2019a: n.p.). In Austria, Diakonie Flüchtlingsdienst offers another example. It describes itself 'as a human rights organization in which the advocacy for the rights of people with migration history is at the centre of our work' (Diakonie Flüchtlingsdienst 2019a: n.p.). It argues that 'In Austria, we can not choose what human rights we want to respect, and human rights are the same for all people,' (Diakonie Flüchtlingsdienst 2018: n.p.) and in the context of its public relations and lobbying work, it links several related issues using human rights framing: 'We campaign for the legal, social and economic equality of permanently established migrants and Austrians. We are committed to enforcing human rights, in particular those on asylum, equal treatment, family unity and the right to a fair trial' (Diakonie Flüchtlingsdienst 2019b: n.p.). Similarly, Republikanischer Club, another Austrian group, states that 'the right to asylum first guarantees human rights beyond national borders. It starts when the individual is no longer protected in their own country...' (Republikanischer Club 2019: n.p.). Moreover, France Terre d'Asile reinforces human rights framing in arguing that 'respect for human rights and the right to asylum must be at the heart of the agreements and partnerships developed by the EU and its Member States with third countries' (France Terre d'Asile 2019: n.p.).

Together, these examples showcase how groups across several different EU countries critique undesirable existing norms and reframe the issue in terms of well-established and widely-accepted alternative norms, which can open up dialogue and ultimately advance change. Because CSOs aim to reframe issues in terms of the strongest possible norms (Raymond et al. 2014: 200), it is not uncommon for migrant- and refugee-focused CSOs to invoke fundamental human rights norms. This reframing strategy has at its foundations certain principles of international protection guaranteed by the international conventions and international legal instruments discussed above, and lays the groundwork for CSOs to associate discrimination, exclusion, and marginalisation of migrants and refugees with accepted human rights norms and thereby justify change.

Normative Innovation: Autonomy and Self-Determination

In addition to reframing the issue with a more fitting norm, advocates can also choose to create new norms

to replace those whose content they outright reject. An analysis of the No One Is Illegal network, together with CSOs in France and Austria, reveals that advocates engage in the process of foregrounding and rejecting problematic norms, which they aim to replace by creating new norms that would be considered more favourable to migrant justice.

No One Is Illegal is an international network of loosely-connected activist groups, religious groups, and individuals. The network is broadly concerned with migrant justice, including initiatives and campaigns that support undocumented and refugee populations. The network explicitly foregrounds and rejects the inherent logic of migration and border policies, which, they argue, perpetuate categories of exclusion and ultimately create a migrant underclass.² Thus, they argue that there can never be 'fair' migration or border policies since their very existence reinforces norms of exclusion and marginalisation of migrant and refugee populations. In their manifesto, they explain that 'Immigration controls should be abolished,' as '[t]hose subject to immigration control are dehumanized, are reduced to non-persons, are nobodies' (No One is Illegal 2003: n.p.). Moreover, they state that 'Immigration controls deny people's right to freedom of movement and the right to decide for themselves where they wish to live and to work. They also deny people access to rights such as the right to work and the right to social and legal protections enjoyed by some of the current inhabitants of the place to which they migrate' (No One is Illegal 2003: n.p.). The network is arguing that immigration controls deny people rights to which they ought to be entitled, thereby creating and reinforcing a system in which exclusion is the underlying principle. Ultimately, the 'repressive' nature of this system serves to perpetuate international norms that prevent the free movement of people (No One is Illegal 2003: n.p.). The movement does not believe that current systems of immigration control can be reformed to be made 'fair,' arguing that 'controls can never be "fair" to those who remain subject to them' (No One is Illegal 2003: n.p.). Similarly, in France, the CSO La Cimade rejects the current norms in labelling France's immigration policy 'the machine to expel' (La Cimade 2019: n.p.). In Austria, moreover, SOS Mitmensch proposes: 'Let's just say goodbye to the idea that asylum seekers are half people with half the minimum income, one quarter access to education, one eighth access to work and zero security and freedom of choice' (Gegen Unmenschlichkeit 2019: n.p.). These CSOs and the No One is Illegal network thus completely reject the norms upon which the system is built. In rejecting national-level norms that render the repression of free movement acceptable, they also attempt to create a new norm that they envision taking hold.

This process of normative innovation is illustrated by the promotion of the norms of autonomy and self-determination vis-a-vis the movement of people – norms which these groups view as underlying a fundamental right to which every person is entitled in controlling their own destiny, as many of the quotes above serve to illustrate. These norms form the basis of No One is Illegal's concept of *free movement for all*, and its guiding principles of 'the freedom to stay, the freedom to move, and the freedom to return' (No One is Illegal Toronto 2019: n.p.). Other CSOs similarly emphasise self-determination and autonomy as new norms in the migration policy space. La Cimade, in France, positions policy reforms based on autonomy as the opposite of the current policy, explaining that 'for foreigners wishing to live in France, obtaining a residence permit is increasingly difficult. From year to year, the State intensifies the devices of deprivation of freedom and control against them. ... Women, men, children crushed by the machine to expel: with Cimade, SAY NO to this inhuman migration policy' (La Cimade 2019: n.p.). Additional examples from Austria also converge on these norms. The promotion of autonomy is implied in Ute Bock's statement, 'The basic attitude towards refugees would have to change. No one has chosen where he is born. It is a coincidence that we are here and the others there' (Gegen Unmenschlichkeit 2019: n.p.). Bundesgeschäftsführer Volkshilfe Österreich provides a more explicit example: 'Self-determination and autonomy are essential for a life of dignity. ... Let's set a sign together for a change of course in asylum policy!' (Gegen Unmenschlichkeit 2019: n.p.). Together, these examples show that a new standard of behaviour is promoted, which views movement as an integral aspect of human existence, ultimately grounded in the ability of the individual to control his or her own life and future.

As Raymond et al. (2014: 202) have observed, 'in cases where an extant rule is explicitly rejected as being inappropriate in all circumstances, an old norm is being rejected and a new norm is being adopted'. Consistent with normative innovation, activists are not merely expanding existing norms into an area in which no normative rules are present. The promoted norm is specific, requiring specific reversals of behavioural expectations, and is used to advocate for new possibilities and to transform the politics governing migration control in order to create opportunities for institutional change. This is a hallmark of normative innovation. The new norms, and the new behaviours they suggest, can insert new issues into the public debate, 'constructing new problems that command public support' (Raymond et al. 2014: 202). This illustrates how CSOs can use norms in innovative ways to legitimise new ways of thinking, to promote new standards of behaviour, and to encourage fundamental changes in society.

Conclusion

This analysis has shown that CSOs working to advance various aspects of migrant justice use both normative reframing and normative innovation strategies in their advocacy work. Prior research examining these norm-based strategies for change has focused on a limited range of issue areas. This analysis contributes an additional case to the empirical literature, illustrating how CSOs use norm-based strategies to address seemingly intractable problems. In addition, consistent with the findings of prior research (Shawki 2015: 61), this analysis has not presented evidence to suggest that CSOs working for migrant justice select a single, unified strategy. Rather, these two strategies are used contemporaneously, as CSOs use normative framing to harness the influence, strength, and legitimacy of existing norms while also working to pioneer the creation and spread of new norms. Therefore, both strategies can be integrated into the advocacy work of CSOs in efforts to advance social and political change. More research is needed to investigate how CSOs use norm-based strategies in a range of other global issues, as such analyses can contribute to building a body of knowledge across issue areas that assesses the application of these strategies and the conditions under which they are most effective in producing reform.

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End Notes

1. See <http://www.forumrefugies.org/presentation/nos-valeurs-notre-mandat>. Information has been translated by the author.
2. See, for example, "All Immigration Controls Must Go!" at <http://www.tacticalmediafiles.net/classic/campaigns/6400/No-One-is-Illegal--Kein-Mensch-ist-Illegal.jsessionid=983F3D3FAB45BE66B710056637E8926F>.

Author

Melissa Schnyder, Ph.D. is Associate Professor of Global Security and Associate Professor of International Relations at American Public University. She also serves as the Editor-in-Chief of the journal *Global Security and Intelligence Studies*. Her research focuses on European Union politics, transatlantic relations, human security policy issues, and the political participation of non-state actors in policymaking.

Chris Danta 2018 *Animal Fables After Darwin: Literature, Speciesism, and Metaphor*, Cambridge University Press, pp. ix +216. Cambridge.

Look up any standard definition of fable and you'll find the genre typically identified as being a short story with animals as characters and conveying a more or less straightforward moral lesson. Taking the episteme-defining significance of Darwin's thought as an historical departure point, *Animal Fables After Darwin* complicates such simplifying, universalising and anthropocentric definitions of the fable by examining intersections between post-Darwinian species discourse and the generic and tropological features of the literary form of fable. The central aim of the book is to demonstrate how post-Darwinian fabulists use the form to critique human exceptionalism by anthropomorphically adopting the perspective of animals. Danta's 'new Aesops' (193) include Robert Louis Stevenson, H.G. Wells, Franz Kafka, T.F. Powys, Angela Carter, David Garnett and J.M. Coetzee. There is much to offer in the way of insightful, contextualised observation and commentary on particular texts in relation to existing primary and secondary literary criticism, as well as the writings of range of thinkers including Charles Darwin, Friedrich Nietzsche, Herbert Spencer, Ernst Haeckel, Carl Hagenbeck, Thomas Nagel, Mikhail Bakhtin, René Girard, Jacques Derrida, Gillian Rose, Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari and Roberto Marchesini.

The 'Prologue' proposes that the post-Darwinian fable plays with the idea of verticality – that is, humans as *above* or *higher* than other species – an argument that is meticulously developed and evidenced in the chapters that follow. The fable, it is argued, resists the speciesist utopianism of animal uplifting: whereas 'the discourse of animal uplifting sanctifies the human as a quasi-theological agent able to transcend biology . . . the fable de-sanctifies the human by reminding it of its biological destiny' (3). Chapter 1 extends this idea by exploring the way in which orientational or spatial metaphors such as the *scala naturae* encode the construction of the human (divine, spiritual, rational) as up and the animal (physical, irrational) as down. This hermeneutic of perspectival verticality is fortified with a discussion of the 'theological grotesque'. This term derives from Wells and describes the way in which fables invert the *scala naturae* by mapping a 'hierarchy of disgust' (Vilém Flusser) onto a biological hierarchy ensuring that species lower on the phylogenetic tree (worms or cockroaches, say) evoke human disgust. In so far as the literary texts under analysis 'emphasize the deconstructive and de-hierarchizing power of the grotesque body' (35) the 'Darwinian grotesque' (20–26), it is argued, bears a distinct family resemblance to the 'Aesopian grotesque'. Wells's *The Island of Dr Moreau* in addition to Stevenson and Kafka's use of fabulous

metamorphosis are adduced to demonstrate how the theological grotesque works to re-orientate the human gaze toward the earth and the nonhuman animal.

Chapter 2 extends the analysis of the grotesque by examining the figure of the mouth by way of reference to Aesop's 'The Wolf and the Lamb' and "The Lion, the Cow, the She-goat and the Sheep", Derrida's *The Beast and the Sovereign* and T.F. Powys's *Fables*. Danta argues that the fable consciously 'exploits the tension between the higher, more human function of the mouth—*logos* or speech—and the lower, more animal function of the mouth: eating or devouring' (47). Aesop, it is argued, uses the grotesque mouth in the pig's tongue episode of the *Aesop Romance*, to challenge the tradition of *sophia* from below, whereas Powys uses the grotesque mouth to challenge the Judeo-Christian theological tradition from below (51). A review of this length cannot do justice to a study of this complexity but suffice it to say that the inclusion of a decidedly non-canonical writer such as T.F. Powys alone ensures that *Fables After Darwin* will remain an original and important contribution to scholarship on literary fable.

Chapter 3 focuses on Stevenson's use of the anthropomorphic form of the fable, with its animist worldview to critique Western anthropocentrism, and is neatly organised around a triad of ant, frog and ape perspectives. Chapter 4 is devoted to Wells's expansion of narrative focus from the individual or the society to the species, particularly in *War of the World* and *The Island of Dr Moreau*. The latter, for example, is a theological grotesque in the sense that Wells flattens the vertical order of things, so that the human becomes associated with bestial confusion rather than divine rationality: Moreau's mad vivisectionist experiments to render the Beast People 'Godlike erect' flounder when the Beast People abandon bipedalism at the end of the novel and reorient themselves once more toward the ground.

Chapters 5 and 6 return to Kafka to further explore the central line of enquiry – fable as a critique of anthropocentrism. In doing so, Chapter 5 explores such themes as solitude, human exceptionalism, and animal brides and bachelors with reference to *The Metamorphosis*, 'A Hunger Artist', 'Investigations of a Dog' and 'A Report to an Academy', James Garnett's 1922 novella *Lady into Fox* and Angela Carter's 'The Tiger's Bride'. Chapter 6 tackles J.M. Coetzee's much debated intertextual use of Kafka's 'A Report to an Academy' in *The Lives of Animals and Elizabeth Costello* and is logically organised around the motifs of the suffering body and the scapegoat. The chapter's final section pursues 'the implications of becoming a sacrificial animal in the modern secular context' (181) by turning to what has become a canonic text of animal studies literature, J.M. Coetzee's *Disgrace*, in particular the powerful scenes towards the end of the novel depicting David Lurie's participation in the

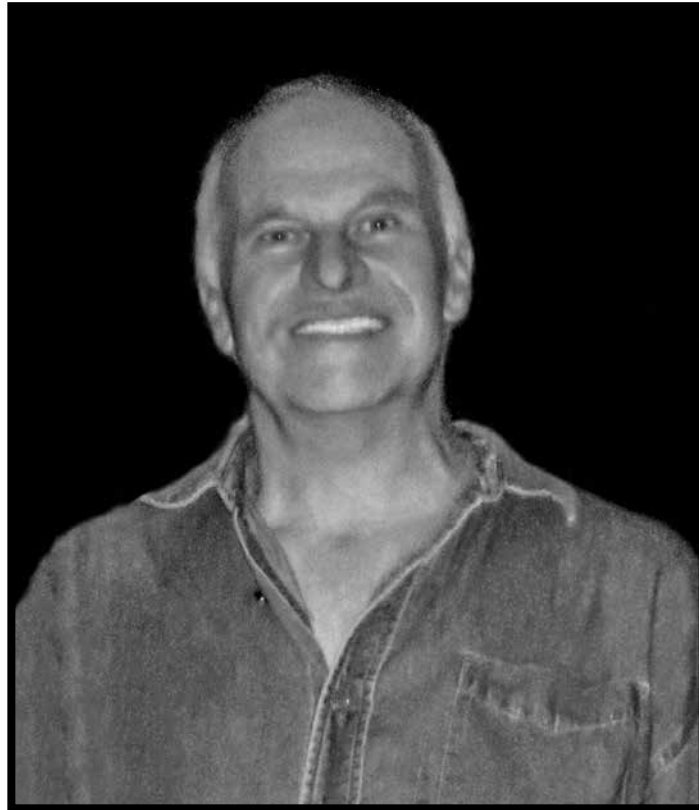
euthanasiation of unwanted dogs at an animal shelter. The 'dog-man' Lurie, Danta argues, ends up as a scapegrace rather than a scapegoat, one who shares the unredeemed finitude of death with the crippled dog he sacrifices. I am not sure, however, that this reading of Coetzee's representation of sacrifice without redemption and the merging of human and animal suffering goes far enough. Despite Coetzee's use of the perfective (like the Hebrew prophets) in the passages depicting Lurie's decision to kill the crippled singing dog, Lurie resists an eschatology of waiting and assumes the human prerogative to participate in what Derrida calls 'noncriminal putting to death'.¹ The 'I' in Lurie's fatal statement of intent – 'I am giving him up' – draws attention to David' and Coetzee's understanding that it is human animals who have control over whether other animals live and die, and that it is humans who have perfected technologies of killing. David Lurie imagines at various points in his relationship with the hapless unnamed dog a tentative interspecies rapprochement but just as the evolutionary history of canine domestication reveals a mix of moralities of control and care, there can be and is no simple relinquishing of mastery by Lurie. If there is a moral lesson to be gleaned from the post-Darwinian fable this book suggests that it is that 'humans belong in the Ape-house' (189), a claim that is literalised in David Garnett's evolutionary fable, *A Man in the Zoo*, the focus of the aptly titled Coda, 'Diogenes in the Zoo'. In conclusion, Chris Danta brilliantly demonstrates that attention to animal lives in the post-Darwinian fable has the potential to generate strong new readings, not only of a ubiquitous yet neglected genre in Anglo-American literary criticism, but also of an ensemble of texts that for too long have been read primarily as ciphers for purely human concerns.

End Note

1. Derrida's description of the sacrificial fate of nonhuman animals and animalised humans. See, Jacques Derrida, "Eating Well, or the Calculation of the Subject," in *Points: Interviews 1974-1994*, ed. Elisabeth Weber, trans. Peggy Kamuf (Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1995), 278.

Author

Jennifer McDonell
University of New England



Vale Dr John Synott

With deep sadness we report on the death of Advisory Board member Dr John Synott. John was a teaching and research academic who published books, chapters and articles on global studies, peace education, Korean and Asian Studies. He wrote poetry and recently published his first work of fiction, *The Fake Prince*. He had played an active role in *Social Alternatives* since 2001. John was a hardworking and enthusiastic member of the Editorial Collective for many years, was poetry editor and theme editor of issues including our 30th anniversary issue. He then joined the Advisory Board where he continued to be engaged and support the Editorial Collective. He was also the founding editor of the *Journal of Peace Studies*. In the words of colleague and fellow advisory board member Don Alexander:

A loving husband, a devoted father, a lover of tennis, an author, a poet and a wonderful friend to so many people. If all of us led such a good life the world would be a much better place. Vale John.

The Ukrainian and the Bad Bad Russians

She was living in Donetsk when Russia annexed Crimea
then Putin wanted Eastern Ukraine too.

Tanks, bombs and war scared her.

She decided to marry an Australian and leave for good.

'I never before travelled, except to Moscow.'

She can't speak English so takes a cash-in-hand job
with a couple of Russian-born entrepreneurs.

They develop farms (flowers, veggies, dope)

the latest venture is quails.

'They have the big boat dream.'

She feeds the birds twice daily, and waters them.

'Funny thing about quails. Quails have no fear. They are never upset.

They chirp and talk to each other – then suddenly go – quiet.

The little fluffy ones are cute. They are all different colours.

They fits in a hand.'

Her main job is to stand at a large table and pack eggs.

No listening to the radio – it could affect the concentration.

Twelve eggs a tray, thirty-six trays a box. Fifty boxes an order.

The owner sells them to Asian restaurants.

'No butchering, thanks God.'

Her hands fly.

Ten hours a day, six days a week.

No holidays.

For two years.

'I can close my eyes and do it.'

In Donetsk, she gained a degree in Economics, mastered six languages
and worked in a bank – foreign transactions.

I guess she is lonely packing those thousands of eggs?

She shrugs. Her dark eyes flash.

'I am getting used to Australia. I am my own woman.'

*LESLEY SYNGE,
HIGHGATE HILL, QLD.*

Between Here and There

I have been at home here, much more at home than I imagined I could be when I was thinking of here from there.

When I was there, I had never been here, so here was to be imagined, except that I could not imagine here. It was too remote, too unknown, too there.

Soon I will be leaving here to go back there, there where I was born, where familiarity bred a kind of blindness, where my mother and old friends await me,

where I can visit my father's grave, where I can think about picking up the threads of a former life or at least some of them, except that I may not stay there for long,

though I will not be coming back here. When there becomes here, I might have to go to another there, following my wife's job opportunities

and start all over again, setting up new threads, leaving behind those I have already left behind and am returning to. Like so much else, it isn't clear.

I have started preparing to leave here to go there, saying my goodbyes, packing up the house, discarding that which will not travel with me from here to there,

selling things, giving things away, tying up a multitude of loose ends. It's a big job, overwhelming, funnelling into the days remaining.

I am still here but I am orienting myself there, thinking about what I need to do here and what I will need to do there, putting things in motion, taking steps.

In the process I am less here than I was and more there than I have been though not there yet, not as there as I will be, nor gone from here yet, not as gone as I will be.

Already disruptions ripple, seismic, through the established daily rituals of here, the haunts, the imposed structures now warping, losing their rigidity,

their illusion of comfort, safety net falling away, revealing what lies beneath, roiling, from here all the way to there and perhaps beyond.

As the countdown of days continues and departure approaches, departure that precedes arrival by almost two days, a space opens up where everything will be held in suspension,

a space between here and there when I am neither here nor there but somewhere else, a transitory space where I am in transit, transition,

where there is a hiatus in what tasks must be done, in where I need to be, and in that space between here and there, perhaps there will be a moment or two when everything

pauses, when I can lay down my head, when I can rest a little on fluffy clouds of uncertainty, there in the sky, life in the balance, resumption pending.

*DAVID ADÈS,
BEECROFT, NSW.*

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