

# Citizen's Income *newsletter*

2019, issue 2

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### Citizen's Income Newsletter

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## Editorials

### Finland

Preliminary results of the Finland experiment, based on data relating to 2017, were announced on the 8<sup>th</sup> February 2019, and additional data was released on the 4<sup>th</sup> April. The pilot project group experienced

better wellbeing, less stress, more trust in others, more trust in their futures, and more trust in politicians, than individuals in the control group. The Citizen's Basic Income was experienced as a more adequate income in the pilot group than in the control group, even though the Citizen's Basic Income was at the same level as the means-tested benefit received by the control group. During the first year there was almost no effect on employment.

It is this last preliminary result that has led some commentators to suggest that the project has been a failure, but that is not necessarily the case. Theory suggests that a Citizen's Basic Income could have two opposite effects. Because it would not be withdrawn as earned incomes rose, additional earned income would result in more additional disposable income than would be the case with means-tested benefits, which are withdrawn as earned income rises. This should incentivise paid employment. On the other hand: a secure income with no work tests attached might enable some individuals with low living costs to reduce hours of employment. The fact that during its first year the Finnish experiment saw almost no change in paid employment can therefore be interpreted in two different directions: 1. It did not result in the additional employment that we might have expected; 2. It did not result in the reduced employment that we might have expected.

- A video of the presentation of preliminary results, with an English translation, can be found at <http://videonet.fi/web/stm/2019028/eng/>.
- Information about the evaluation of the pilot project can be found at <http://tutkimusblogi.kela.fi/arkisto/4698>.
- Further details of the results can be found at <https://www.kela.fi/web/en/experimental-study-on-a-universal-basic-income>.
- A video of the seminar on the 4th April can be found here: <http://videonet.fi/web/kela/20190404/>
- and the slides here, <https://www.slideshare.net/tag/perustulokokeilu>,
- A summary of the results can be found here, [https://www.kela.fi/web/en/news-archive/-/asset\\_publisher/IN08GY2nIrZo/content/basic-income-recipients-experienced-less-financial-insecurity?utm\\_source=uutiskirje&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=Experimental+study+on+a+basic+income+2018](https://www.kela.fi/web/en/news-archive/-/asset_publisher/IN08GY2nIrZo/content/basic-income-recipients-experienced-less-financial-insecurity?utm_source=uutiskirje&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Experimental+study+on+a+basic+income+2018)

- and a short video that summarises the results here, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aYjVQ8BYL Dk&feature=youtu.be>.

## The emergence of consensus

An interesting consensus has emerged from recent reports on Citizen's Basic Income.

The think tank Compass has published a new report, *Basic Income for All: From desirability to feasibility*, by Stewart Lansley and Howard Reed:

This paper examines some options for the introduction of a basic income scheme in the UK. It seeks to answer the central practical criticism that the payment levels are either too small to make a difference or too generous to be affordable.

A number of criteria are set that the scheme has to meet: the reduction of poverty and inequality; an increase in the universality of benefits; a decrease in means-testing; a reduction in the risk of destitution; affordability; few losses for low income households; and the avoidance of major changes to the existing tax and benefits system. The report then proposes a working age adult Citizen's Basic Income of £60 per week funded by making changes to the current tax and benefits system.

There are minor differences between the Compass scheme and the scheme published by ISER last year. The former replaces Child Benefit and the Basic Income Pension with new unconditional payments, whereas the latter retains and increases Child Benefit, and retains the Basic State Pension and adds a small unconditional income on top. And although both schemes abolish the Income Tax Personal Allowance, and both make the same changes to National Insurance Contributions, there are minor differences between the two schemes' treatments of Income Tax rates. However, all of the differences are small. The two schemes are remarkably similar, and they satisfy similar sets of constraints.

Superficially different is a scheme recently published by the New Economics Foundation. The proposal is for a 'Weekly National Allowance' - an unconditional income of £48.08 per week for every adult over the age of 18 apart from those earning over £125,000. This might have a different name, but it looks remarkably like a Citizen's Basic Income, and it would be one if it were paid to everyone. Also, it is funded by abolishing the Income Tax Personal Allowance, which is the same basic method as the Compass scheme and the scheme published by ISER. It would only require the Weekly National Allowance

to be paid to everyone over the age of 18 for the incomes to become a genuine Citizen's Basic Income. (High earners could be charged additional Income Tax to cover the additional cost, and to prevent them from benefiting financially from the scheme.) As for the name of the income: it might be of interest that the report's authors have chosen a name for the allowance that is very similar to the one proposed by a recent Citizen's Basic Income Trust working group when it prepared draft illustrative legislation for a Citizen's Basic Income: 'Fair Allowance'.

It is a pleasure to see a new report from Compass, and a particular pleasure to see the New Economics Foundation engaging with the Citizen's Basic Income debate. And it also a pleasure to see the two reports helping to build a consensus around a feasible Citizen's Basic Income scheme.

*Reviews of both the Compass report and the New Economics Foundation report can be found in this edition of the Newsletter.*

### References:

The Compass report: <https://citizensincome.org/book-reviews/a-new-report-from-compass/>

The ISER publication: <https://www.iser.essex.ac.uk/research/publications/working-papers/euromod/em12-17a>

The New Economics Foundation report: <https://neweconomics.org/2019/03/nothing-personal>

The Citizen's Basic Income Trust's draft illustrative legislation for a Fair Allowance: <https://citizensincome.org/news/illustrative-draft-legislation-for-a-citizens-basic-income/>

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## Main articles

### Family carers accessing benefits and support: Which bespoke provisions are useful, and which could be universalised?

By Anna Heyman

#### Introduction

Family carers are people of any age who regularly provide practical, emotional and organisational care and assistance to long term sick and disabled family members. This article focusses on young adult carers, caring for people with physical conditions or learning disabilities, but much of the analysis applies equally to any working age carer, and also to the carers of people with mental health problems. It discusses the advantages and disadvantages of young adult carers

being treated as a tightly defined category for service access and benefit purposes.

## History

In the 1970s, Invalid Care Allowance was designed for 'spinster daughters' giving up work entirely to care for their ageing parents. A small earnings disregard (£123 per week at the time of writing) was added in the 1980s to allow some flexibility. The National Carers Strategy of 1999 aimed to expand and focus all services and support for carers with the aim of improving their current lives and long-term life prospects. As part of this strategy, the recently renamed Carers Allowance was extended to allow an eight-week continuation of payments following the death of the cared for person (see note three). However, despite these provisions, young carers have continued to face difficulties getting their needs taken seriously by teachers, and young adult carers have remained one of the most socially excluded groups in society.<sup>1</sup>

## Carers' Support Services

Carers' services fall into two categories:

- the tailoring of care packages, to ensure that the caring role is doable for a particular carer, and does not impinge on the carer's own physical, mental and social needs, and
- direct support for carers to meet their additional needs for peer support, bespoke training and leisure opportunities, advice, guidance and counselling.

The first type of service is vastly underused, with the result that only a 'tiny minority' of carers have any contact with social services.<sup>2</sup>

The second type of service is mostly run by the voluntary sector and is much better utilised. Such services benefit from being able to set their own definitions and thresholds in terms of who counts as a 'carer'. This allows voluntary sector services to include many people who would not strictly identify themselves as carers (e.g. people accompanying disabled family members to doctors' surgeries, and children in need of support because of the emotional

<sup>1</sup> Becker, F., & Becker, S. (2008). *Young adult carers in the UK: Experiences, needs and services for carers aged 16-24*. London: Princess Royal Trust for Carers; Sempik, J., & Becker, S. (2013). *Young adult carers at school: Experiences and perceptions of caring and education*. London: Carers Trust.

<sup>2</sup><https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200708/cmselect/cmworpen/485/485i.pdf>

impact of disability in the family),<sup>3</sup> and avoids the challenge of distinguishing between hours spent caring and hours spent associating as a family.

## Carers Allowance

It is almost universally recognised that people caring for a relative for more than 35 hours a week on average cannot be expected to look for paid work, given that the hours of required care in a given week will often greatly exceed 35 hours, and that caring can take a high physical toll on the carers' health.<sup>4</sup> However, the converse situation is also well recognised: there will be times when carers feel able and willing to undertake paid work. Carers' training needs and aspirations for the future also need to be taken into account. The highly bureaucratic nature of Carers Allowance (restricting claimants to 22 hours study and £123 a week earnings) is well known to be a major barrier to employment and training, specifically because of the 'cliff edge effect' of losing the entire allowance<sup>5</sup> if the carers' earnings increase even slightly over £123. It has also been noted that not enough carers know that they are eligible for Carers Allowance.<sup>6</sup>

Members of Parliament have tried to address these issues via an Early Day Motion calling for Carers Allowance to be paid unconditionally to carers in the same way that Child Benefit is paid to all parents of children under 18.<sup>7</sup> However, even this step would not take into account the complexity of the decision to take on a major caring role in situations where there are other options (e.g. other available family members). Nor would it provide long term financial help to claimants whose caring role ends because the cared for person has wholly or partially recovered.

Many young adult carers (and some under 16s) already fit more than 35 hours around working and/or studying, without claiming Carers Allowance. Nevertheless, one of the few in-depth studies on this topic<sup>8</sup> found that becoming a Carers Allowance

<sup>3</sup> Olsen, R., & Clarke, H. (2003). *Parenting and disability: disabled parents' experiences of raising children*. Bristol: The Policy Press; Princess, A. (1999). Reaching out to carers. *Nursing Standard (through 2013)*, 13(24), 25.

<sup>4</sup>[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/238683/7506.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/238683/7506.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> <https://edm.parliament.uk/early-day-motion/38530/carers-allowance>

<sup>6</sup><https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200708/cmselect/cmworpen/485/485i.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> <https://edm.parliament.uk/early-day-motion/38530/carers-allowance>

<sup>8</sup> Heyman, A., & Heyman, B. (2013). 'The sooner you can change their life course the better': The time-framing of risks in relationship to being a young carer. *Health, risk &*

claimant at age 16 is likely to involve a major increase in caring hours, as hours at school are replaced by yet more caring tasks. Only three out of the thirteen young adult carers in the study that we have undertaken were claiming carers payments, and of these, two were in time limited roles (e.g. caring for someone with a terminal illness), where they could prepare to move on to other things entirely at the end of their caring role. In contrast, people working with young carers have described cases where the cared for person is expected to continually need care for decades to come, and the young carer (or their families on their behalf) decides to indefinitely forego any type of part time study or work option from age 16 and subsist entirely on Carers Allowance:

If they discover you can get a bit of money to do that, 'ah well there you are, I don't have to go into training and stuff!'. (Young Carers Worker 1).

He decided he would go to college, his mam first said he couldn't, he would have to get Carer's Allowance (Young Carers Worker 2).

Meanwhile young adult carers who worked or studied full time without ever claiming carers payments were nevertheless struggling both financially and in terms of time:

I only get £600 a month! ... I don't get a penny for doing what I do for my mum ... but I'm doing a second job, I just don't get paid and taxed ... I would have to work 4 hours just to get an hour of care for each of them ... [if I gave up my outside job] but yes I'd get 20p an hour! (Young Carer in near full-time employment, aged 19 at time of interview).

The above case shows that:

1. a lack of money to pay for necessary extras can make it difficult for carers to maintain a job outside the home, and
2. the option of getting Carers Allowance while not working outside of the home is not considered fair recompense for a long-term caring role.

### Looking to the future

Having analysed the current problem, I shall now propose a possible solution which will help both carers and cared for people to expand their life options. For carers, there is a possible 'best of both worlds' scenario, whereby carers, alongside every

*society*, 15(6-7), 561-579 – a study of 13 young carers and 10 young carers workers.

other British resident adult, would receive a Citizen's Basic Income, unconditionally, to the same value as the current Carers Allowance, but would also be able to claim casual or one-off payments for distinct and onerous care tasks (e.g. showering the cared for person each morning or filling in a cognitively disabled person's financial paper work). The collective fund for the one-off payments in each area could come from government, but be allocated to carers by a carers' charity, in whichever way the charity saw fit (indeed, one charity-based young carers' worker suggested precisely such a 'sliding scale of the contribution that they make' – see note 8). This would allow the carer complete flexibility to reduce or give up their caring role entirely, if a job or study opportunity came along and other care options were available. It would also remove the barriers for those continuing in a caring role but wanting to work/study alongside it in order to guarantee subsistence in the event that the cared for person recovered. But it would still encourage the types of entrepreneurial behaviour that have been observed in carers who regard caring as a job.<sup>9</sup>

Meanwhile the cared for person would also see a lessening of barriers to their life choices, if disability payments were decoupled from subsistence. The think tank Demos has already suggested that responsibility for helping disabled people into work should be handed from the DWP to another government department,<sup>10</sup> and I would also suggest that responsibility for handling payments for the additional costs of living with a disability should also be handed from the DWP to another department. Disabled people could have a reliable source of subsistence through the Citizen's Basic Income, regardless of changes in their condition, and regardless of any decision to try to work, study, take leisure, or volunteer. This would in turn further benefit carers, who currently experience a great deal of stress when the cared for person moves in and out of work, and is constantly forced to re-navigate the benefit system, particularly if the cared for person has a cognitive impairment which leaves them unable to apply for benefits without the carer's support.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Heyman, A. (2018). What do young adult carers learn through supporting family members? Extending the affirmation model. *Disability & Society*, 33(8), 1191-1211. Hamilton, M.G., & Adamson, E. (2013). Bounded agency in young carers' lifecourse-stage domains and transitions. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 16(1), 101-117.

<sup>10</sup> <https://inews.co.uk/news/dwp-should-be-stripped-of-responsibility-for-vulnerable-groups-after-universal-credit-failing/>

<sup>11</sup> Beyer, S., Grove, B., Schneider, J., Simons, K., Williams, V., Heyman, A., Swift, P., & Krijnen-Kemp, E.

## Conclusion

The term 'carer' remains useful for the purpose of focussing service funding on emotionally and physically involved family members of disabled people, and a non-work-conditional subsistence payment of some kind is essential for family members providing substantial hours of care. The 2009 Early Day Motion would go some way to alleviating the money problems of carers in near full-time employment and making their working lives more sustainable. However, under the EDM proposed scheme, access would still require that one family member continually provide a specified amount of care. The consensus of evidence and opinion is that this specification is a barrier to carers' activities outside of the home, and reduces take up by intended beneficiaries. A layer of unconditional income for both the carer and the cared for person would begin to alleviate the difficulties.

*Anna Heyman currently works at the Newcastle Business School, Northumbria University, doing Quantitative and Qualitative Programme Evaluation research.*

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## Basic Income: Towards an Intellectual History

### Opening Remarks at a conference on the history of Citizen's Basic Income on the 14<sup>th</sup> January 2019

By Pedro Ramos Pinto

In January 2019 Peter Sloman, Daniel Zamora and I welcomed over fifty scholars, campaigners and students to Cambridge for a one-day conference on 'Basic Income: towards an Intellectual History'. The piece below, adapted from my opening remarks to the conference, gives a personal view of how we might begin to write a history of Universal Basic income ideas, and what that might be useful for.

Our motivation to hold the conference was simple – the idea of a Universal Basic Income (UBI) has gained a degree of visibility that is arguably unprecedented (whether it is or not was one of the topics of the conference). It seemed to us high time to bring together the still small but increasing number of researchers taking an historical perspective on the

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(2004) *Working lives: The role of day centres in supporting people with learning disabilities into employment*, London: Corporate Document Services (No. 2003).

idea. And we were also keen to invite some of those who have been involved in campaigning and discussing UBI for decades, bringing our different perspectives into conversation. To open the proceedings, I asked a provocative question: what might be the use of a history of Universal Basic Income?

When bringing any idea to the public arena, inserting it in a venerable genealogy – be it the tradition of Tom Paine or of Milton Friedman, for instance – is a way of seeking legitimation. It anchors the unusual in the familiar, and helps the argument gain the ear and trust of an audience. But it is also a distortion – if a well meant one. Ideas change the world but are also the product of their world and change with it. 'Basic Income-like' ideas in the 1930s, for example, were something very different from the idea of Universal Basic Income today. If we seek to remake the past in our image, rather than work with its difference, its unfamiliarity and discontinuities, we will learn little. A further difficulty is that the idea of Basic Income may have a history, but as an institution, a policy, its practical history is short. Outside a few limited experiments, Basic Income is an ideal awaiting implementation.

It has been said that UBI is 'An idea whose time has come'. But, for all its appeal, it is an idea whose time has come and gone several times during the last century. On the one hand, we no longer see such experiences as rehearsals on a pre-determined road to fulfilment: the teleological certainties of modern ideologies, where the past would show the road to the future, have gone. Yet neither should we have to see those past moments as confirmation of UBI's impossibility.

So, what then can a History of Basic Income give to us?

In his recent book advocating Basic Income – *Give a Man a Fish: Reflections on the New Politics of Distribution* (2015) - the anthropologist James Ferguson writes of the importance of what he calls 'historicising the future'. For Ferguson, this means that any future oriented project must explore 'the distinct layers of sedimented history that shape and constrain the field of possibilities' for its coming into being.<sup>12</sup> This seems to me a productive way to engage with history – although not an easy one. By historicising those moments in the past when basic income-like proposals emerge, we can do three things. First, we can explore the assemblages of power, ideas, and agency through which the idea

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<sup>12</sup> James Ferguson, *Give a Man a Fish*, p. 82.

came to the fore each time; second, we can analyse the conditions of possibility – the political struggles, the obstacles, and the successes - of each of those moments; and finally, we can use that knowledge to reflect on how our present basic income ‘wave’ was built upon those layers of history, and on its own conditions of possibility.

Under the first heading we can ask why do basic income-like proposals emerge at particular times and recede into the background in others; and in what forms it appears at each instance. For instance, how are key questions about entitlement addressed – who is a citizen? how does citizenship intersect with gender and race? – but also about institutional form: what is the role envisaged for the state and other actors? Similarly, we should ask what kinds of problems is Basic Income proposed as a response to at different times. But we should also be attentive to the importance of place: how have Basic Income ideas entered political currency differently in the global south and in the global north?

The ‘conditions of possibility’ direct us to the arguments and counter-arguments made at each moment, their content, but also their framing, and how these vary according to historical context. When have Basic Income ideas been presented as radical utopias or as the pragmatic response to perceived challenges? But it also asks us to identify who is a part of these debates: what is the role of intellectuals, including academics? - of policy-makers and radical outsiders? And what are the channels of diffusion, the arenas of debate, and the institutions through which Basic Income debates are played out? Finally, who are its adversaries, and what are the obstacles to the progress of the proposal in each of these instances? In sum: what has been the political history of the idea of Basic Income?

Because each episode is different, because the past is different, the answers to these questions will not give us a roadmap to the future. They may, however, help us see how and why Basic Income grows in popularity in certain conditions and not in others; it helps us to reflect on how our own present concerns and situations are the result of historical sedimentation, of routes taken and not taken in the past. But, and in my opinion most importantly, the exercise of understanding and analysing the past in its own terms is also an aid to help us better understand our own blind spots, assumptions, and ideologies. Asking questions of the past can lead us to ask questions of our own present – look around corners we have ignored before, consider neglected difficulties but also possibilities. Ultimately, this kind of critical reflection – encompassing the past and the

present – is a way of thinking about the constraints and opportunities for radical change in the field of social justice.

*This text is adapted from the opening remarks to ‘The Intellectual History of Universal Basic Income’ conference, held in 14 January 2019 at the University of Cambridge. The programme can be found here: <http://inequalityandhistory.blogspot.com/2018/10/an-intellectual-history-of-universal.html>*

Pedro Ramos Pinto is Senior Lecturer in International Economic History at the University of Cambridge

## News

**Positive Money** has published a new video that suggests that when the next financial crisis arrives, the Bank of England, instead of creating money to buy government bonds, which enriches bondholders, should give the money in equal quantities to all legal residents. The payments would be similar to the Alaska Permanent Fund Dividend, and would have similar beneficial effects and no obvious downsides. Most importantly, most of the money would be spent into the real economy, unlike previous quantitative easing. An additional advantage of paying the money to every legally resident individual would be that a mechanism to do that would have to be constructed. This would make the implementation of a Citizen’s Basic Income easy to achieve if the decision were to be taken to implement one.

(<https://twitter.com/PositiveMoneyUK/status/1102992838248275969>)

**The London School of Economics** has published research about the alleged simplicity of Universal Credit and the lived experience of benefit claimants. The researchers, Kate Summers and David Young, challenge the assumed simplicity of Universal Credit by focusing on its single monthly payment design. They draw on two empirical studies of means-tested benefit claimants in order to explain how short-termism is a crucial tool for those managing social security benefits. ‘... The evidence shows that social security recipients have developed effective tools and processes to make ends meet while in receipt of meagre means-tested payments: the monthly payment design of UC pushes against many of these strategies. Moreover, the earmarking tools and short-term orientations are sometimes seen as deficiencies to be fixed with money management education and training. Instead they should be recognised for what they are: astute responses to managing on a very low income. Within the current ‘re-think’ period, there remains a powerful consensus that Universal Credit

is, or at least can be, simple. While certain administrative simplification still has the potential to improve a system widely seen as too complex, this must be considered alongside claimant experience. Claims of simplicity can often mean that complexity does not go away but is shifted out of sight, backstage. We argue that with Universal Credit, the complexity of managing to make ends meet on a very low-income could end up being shifted onto those that can least afford it: the claimants themselves.' (<https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/politicsandpolicy/universal-credit-simplicity/>)

**Also from the London School of Economics:** Research on the relationship between Universal Credit and the reasons for civil servants leaving their jobs at the Department for Work and Pensions has been published on the LSE's British politics and Policy website. (<https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/politicsandpolicy/ex-jobcentre-plus-staff/>)

**Universal Basic Income Europe (UBIE)** has published a new video about Citizen's Basic Income: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tnbdpM5aPLA&feature=youtu.be>

A new research project at the **Institute for Policy Research** at the University of Bath will examine the scope for Citizen's Basic Income as a necessary element of macroeconomic demand management. From empirical economic data, the research will test the hypothesis that in high technology economies, productivity causes wages and hence consumer income to become deficient against output GDP, requiring increased unearned or basic income. (<https://www.bath.ac.uk/projects/the-economics-of-basic-income/>)

**The International Monetary Fund** has published an article, 'What is Universal Basic Income?' by Maura Francese and Delphine Prady. '... Scholars disagree on whether a universal basic income is more appropriate for countries with limited and ill-functioning safety nets or for rich countries that can afford it. Limited administrative capacity argues for a shift toward more universal transfer programs in developing economies. But displacement of other priorities (such as education and health) where revenue mobilization is problematic—particularly in the short term - is a concern. In advanced economies, universal basic income is often used as an instrument to address inadequate safety nets (and ensure inclusion) and a way to tackle the challenges of technological and demographic changes. Country authorities must assess the relative merits of universal basic income, including its financing through

rechannelling resources already used in other ways or through higher taxes and contributions. (<https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/fandd/2018/12/what-is-universal-basic-income-basics.htm>)

The **Institute for Fiscal Studies** has published research on disability benefits and the supported care for which Local Authorities are responsible: '... We find that receipt of ... support rises as disability increases, with a strong concentration on the most disabled, especially for local-authority-funded care. The overlap between the two programmes is confined to the most disabled. Less than half of recipients of local-authority-funded care also receive a disability benefit; a third of those in the top 10 per cent of the disability distribution receive neither form of support. Despite being non-means-tested, disability benefits display a degree of income and wealth targeting, as a consequence of the socio-economic gradient in disability and likely disability benefit claims behaviour. The scope for improving income/wealth targeting of disability benefits by means testing them, as some have suggested, is thus less than might be expected.' (Ruth Hancock, Marcello Morciano and Stephen Pudney, 'Public Support for Older Disabled People: Evidence from the English Longitudinal Study of Ageing on Receipt of Disability Benefits and Social Care Subsidy', *Fiscal Studies*, volume 41, no. 1, March 2019, pp. 19-43: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/1475-5890.12169>)

**Paul Spicker has published a series of reports on Citizen's Basic Income, and he has issued a blog post containing a summary:**

*Some reservations about Basic Income*

Yesterday I was at the launch of the report from a seminar series organised by the Scottish Universities Insight Institute in conjunction with Citizen's Basic Income Network Scotland. My role has been as the resident sceptic; I prepared a series of background papers and a paper outlining the reasons for my doubts, and how they might be overcome. The results are in the report, *Exploring Basic Income in Scotland*, available here:

<https://www.scottishinsight.ac.uk/Portals/80/ReportsandEvaluation/Programme%20reports/Basic%20Income%20Final%20Report%20WEB%20version.pdf>

There are my papers on Basic Income and Human Rights and Equality on pp 12-17, Care on pp 47-52, Housing on pages 62-65. The longer paper on Reservations about Basic Income is on pp 90-104.

The summary of those reservations goes like this:

- Even if we accept all the arguments for Basic Income in principle, there are serious issues to resolve relating to cost, distribution, adequacy and practical implementation.
- Basic Income schemes are all very expensive. The first question to ask is not whether we can afford BI, but whether we should – whether the money would not be better used in some other way.
- All the Basic Income schemes which have been developed to date make some poor people worse off. That mainly happens because they try to pay for BI by cutting or reducing existing benefits. Any scheme which does that it is going to benefit some people on higher incomes more than it benefits people on lower ones.
- The treatment of existing benefits and of current tax allowances cannot work as intended. Basic Income cannot meet all the contingencies currently covered by social security benefits. It should not even try to do so.
- BI will not be without its complications. It is time to address them.

Basic Income cannot be 'adequate', but it does not need to be; it only needs to be basic. A modest income could be provided without damage to poor people, so long as it does not affect the status of other benefits.

*A response appeared as follows:*

Dear Paul

As I'm sure you know, the objections that you lodge against Basic Income are in fact objections to particular Basic Income schemes, and not to Basic Income. There are of course Basic Income schemes that are very expensive, that make poor people worse off, that don't allow for different people's different needs, and that would be difficult to implement. However, there are also Basic Income schemes – containing genuine Basic Incomes – to which the objections do not apply: for instance, <https://www.euromod.ac.uk/publications/update-correction-and-extension-evaluation-illustrative-citizen's-basic-income-scheme> (updated research using the EUROMOD microsimulation programme will be available soon). If there is a single Basic Income scheme to which none of your objections apply, then none of the objections apply to Basic Income.

Best wishes

Malcolm

Dr. Malcolm Torry, Director, Citizen's Basic Income Trust, and Visiting Senior Fellow, London School of Economics

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## Conference

This year's BIEN Congress will be held in Hyderabad, India, from the 22<sup>nd</sup> to the 25<sup>th</sup> August. For further details, see the congress website: <https://indiabasicincome.in/congress/>

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## Reviews

### **A review of a lecture by Richard Sennett, 'Bare Life'.**

On Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2019 at the London School of Economics, in Professor Richard Sennett's public lecture series about the future of the welfare state, Professor Robin Mansell chaired presentations by Professor Sennett and Professor Robert Skidelsky on the subject 'Welfare after Beveridge: Bare life'.

Professor Sennett described automation of two kinds: 'replicants' - artificial intelligence represented by Amazon's Alexa - and 'robots'. The latter are slowly affecting manufacturing, but the former are turning careers into jobs, destroying the possibility of work forming a life narrative, and generating a gig economy characterised by underemployment. This has increased the incidence of depression, and has given those involved a constant feeling that their lives make no difference to the world. The result is 'bare life', in which life is experienced as barren.

Professor Sennett then outlined two variants of what he called 'Basic Income': the unconditional regular payments normally called Basic Income or Citizen's Basic Income, and one-off stakeholder grants. While the latter could provide the possibility of entrepreneurial activity, their value could easily disappear either quickly or suddenly, the former would provide a level of economic security and therefore a constant opportunity to do meaningful unpaid work and experience agency. In this context, Citizen's Basic Income is less an answer to inequality and more about creating productive human beings who experience purpose.

Professor Skidelsky envisaged Citizen's Basic Income providing individuals with more choice over whether to seek work activity or leisure activity, and with more control over conditions of work. He discussed common objections to Citizen's Basic Income – that the income would not be the result of individual effort, that nothing would be required in return, and cost. He regarded the first of these

objections as the most difficult to respond to because 'unearned income' forms the basis of objections to the rentier class. He suggested that because cost would be less of a problem in a growing economy, such an economy would be the best context for implementing a Citizen's Basic Income; and he also suggested that a context of full employment would make the other two objections more difficult to sustain.

*A short period of discussion followed the two presentations.*

First of all, two minor quibbles with Professor Sennett's presentation: Philippe Van Parijs has been an important author and advocate of Citizen's Basic Income, but he was not *the* founder of the modern movement. He was one of many: and a number of earlier ones were in the UK.

Scotland was listed as having started pilot projects in four boroughs. Together, the Scottish boroughs are half-way through a two-year exploration of the feasibility of conducting a joint pilot study in Scotland. We are still a long way from pilot projects starting in Scotland.

More importantly: In response to the objections listed by Professor Skidelsky and the responses that he offered:

- A Citizen's Basic Income of a reasonable size could be funded from within the current tax and benefits system without causing any untoward consequences.<sup>13</sup> There is no need to wait for a growing economy.
- Because a Basic Income of any size would remove a lot of households from means-tested benefits, the reduced marginal deduction rates that those households would experience would provide them with enhanced incentives to seek employment or to start their own businesses. A Citizen's Basic Income would therefore help to bring about full employment. There would be no need to wait for full employment before implementing a Citizen's Basic Income.
- If a Citizen's Basic Income were to be paid for largely by turning the Income Tax Personal Allowance and the National Insurance Contribution Primary Earnings Threshold into cash payments, then it would be difficult to sustain the argument that the Citizen's Basic Income would be unearned income of a somehow

illegitimate kind, because the same argument would count the Personal Allowance and the Primary Earnings Threshold as equivalent to rentier income. As Samuel Brittan once suggested, the only thing wrong with unearned incomes is that not everybody has one.<sup>14</sup> If everybody were to have one, and if the income were to be of the same amount for everybody of the same age, then the 'equivalent to rentier income' argument could no longer be sustained.

This was a significant event. We look forward to further London School of Economics contributions to the Citizen's Basic Income debate. Further details of the event, and a podcast, can be found at <http://www.lse.ac.uk/Events/2019/01/20190123t1830vOT/Welfare-after-Beveridge-Bare-Life>

**Alfie Stirling and Sarah Arnold, *Nothing Personal: Replacing the Personal Tax Allowance with a Weekly National Allowance: How we can change the tax system to be more progressive while increasing the breadth, depth and generosity of the UK's income safety net?* New Economics Foundation, 2019.** Free to download at <https://neweconomics.org/2019/03/nothing-personal>

It is a pleasure to see the New Economics Foundation engage so constructively in the Citizen's Basic Income debate. Its report, *Nothing Personal*, is an important contribution to the debate, and a useful lesson in the contribution that framing the Citizen's Basic Income idea in new ways can make.

The report sets out from the UK Government's policy of constantly raising the Income Tax Personal Allowance. This policy gives more to those with higher incomes than to those with lower incomes, and nothing to those who already earn below the tax threshold. The authors' proposal is to turn the Income Tax Personal Allowance into an equal cash payment to every individual adult over the age of 18 and earning below £125,000 per annum. (The weekly sum would be £48.08 for most of the UK for 2019/20, but £45.68 in Scotland due to its lower initial tax rate.) The authors also suggest that Child Benefit should be restored to its real terms 2010/11 value. Their research shows that the combination of these two policies would be highly redistributive, and fiscally neutral (because the Weekly National Allowance

<sup>14</sup> Samuel Brittan, 'Review of Promoting Income Security as a Right: Europe and North America, *Guy Standing (ed.)*, *Citizen's Income Newsletter*, issue 2 for 2005, pp. 8-9.

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.iser.essex.ac.uk/research/publications/working-papers/euromod/em12-17a>

would be treated as income for the purposes of calculating means-tested benefits). For individuals who are unemployed, the increase in incomes that the Weekly National Allowance would represent would provide better stabilisation during recessions than the current system, with its weakened protection for households on low incomes.

It is unfortunate that this generally excellent report is marred by ill-informed comment on current research on Citizen's Basic Income. Much of this research is not about 'a UBI that could effectively replace existing welfare' (p. 9). It is about doing precisely what the New Economics Foundation is trying to do: add a layer of unconditional and therefore secure income to the existing system. A typical example of this research, which they seem to have missed, is published by the Institute for Social and Economic Research:<sup>15</sup> but much of the work published by Compass and the Institute for Policy Research is along the same lines. A Citizen's Basic Income, or a Universal Basic Income, is an unconditional income for every individual: which is precisely what these authors are proposing. The definition makes no mention of replacing current means-tested benefits. It would be enormously helpful if think tanks did not divide themselves into camps, for and against Citizen's Basic Income. What is required is a combined research effort based on the proven usefulness of unconditional cash transfers and an understanding of what would be feasible in the current UK context.

In this context, it might be of interest that the New Economics Foundation has chosen a name for their proposal – Weekly National Allowance - that is very similar to that proposed by a Citizen's Basic Income Trust working group on illustrative draft legislation: 'Fair Allowance'. This is no surprise. The authors clearly feel that 'Basic Income' terminology is tainted. This is because they have assumed that the term means a high unconditional payment that would replace the current benefits system. As we have seen, that is not true: but the perception of taint is clearly a common one. Hence the Citizen's Basic Income Trust's choice of a different term for its illustrative draft legislation. Given that a lot of people and institutions are clearly intent on misunderstanding the definition of Citizen's or Universal Basic Income, we might all have to employ a new term for a Citizen's Basic Income paid at a feasible level and not intended to replace the current social security system.

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.euromod.ac.uk/publications/update-correction-and-extension-evaluation-illustrative-citizen's-basic-income-scheme>

But the authors' misunderstanding of the term Universal Basic Income is the only ill-informed argument in this report. There is much that is well-informed. A particularly useful section is on the complex effects that a Weekly National Allowance (and therefore a Citizen's Basic Income) would have on employment incentives. This could usefully be expanded through further research.

The authors employ the IPPR's tax and benefit model and Family Resources Survey data to evaluate their proposal. This is similar to the model employed by the Citizen's Basic Income Trust and the Institute for Policy Research, both of which use EUROMOD; and to the model used by Compass: the model run by Landman Economics, which shares an ancestry with the IPPR model. Appendices to the report contain the results on the basis of which the authors can say that their proposal would be progressive and would reduce both poverty and inequality. As research published by Compass and the Institute for Social and Economic Research has also found, the authors find that their proposed increase in Child Benefit mitigates some of the household losses that might otherwise have resulted from their proposal,

The report contains some useful case studies of particular households, and some proposals for further research. What would have been useful would have been a close study of the levels of gains and losses for households. There is no such thing as a fiscally neutral policy change that does not generate gains and losses, and it is particularly important to where these occur so that net losses can be avoided for low income households. Simply stating mean increases for each income decile or percentile is not sufficient, as those can mask substantial numbers of household losses. Similarly, the 'typical family' calculations in the report are of interest, but they tell us nothing about where net household income losses might occur. The Institute for Social and Economic Research working papers offer a useful model for undertaking and reporting the necessary research.

**Stewart Lansley and Howard Reed, *Basic Income for All: From desirability to feasibility*, Compass, 2019, 40 pp, free to download at <http://www.compassonline.org.uk/basic-income-for-all/>**

This is another useful report from the Lansley and Reed duo, following their 2016 Compass publication *Universal Basic Income: An idea whose time has come?* That report tested two costed Citizen's Basic Income schemes, one that abolished means-tested benefits, and one that did not, and a proposal to fund

future Citizen's Basic Incomes through a social wealth fund. The authors showed that a 'big bang' scheme that replaced most of the existing system was not feasible, and recommended a partial scheme grafted onto the existing benefits system. The new report pursues the same agenda and concentrates on feasibility and implementation, because, as the subtitle suggests, the Citizen's Basic Income debate is moving on from the question of desirability to the question of feasibility and implementation.

Readers should not skip the foreword in this report. It is an important contribution to the debate by Baroness Ruth Lister, Emeritus Professor of Social Policy at Loughborough University. She references Karen Buck MP and Declan Gaffney's September 2018 article that proposes a Citizen's Basic Income below subsistence level as preferable to increasing the Income Tax Personal Allowance,<sup>16</sup> and notes that Lansley and Reed's 'progressive Partial Basic Income' would 'provide a genuine safety net under the safety net ... there is no reason why it should add to the complexity of the overall system once it is in place .... [it] would provide a modicum of basic economic security in an insecure world'.

The report rehearses some of the usual reasons for implementing a Citizen's Basic Income – a degree of certainty in a less secure world, personal empowerment, and a reduction in means-testing – and lists some entirely sensible criteria for a 'feasible and progressive basic income'. It should

- Be paid to everyone, without condition, and cannot be withdrawn
- Be progressive (raise the incomes of the poorest while reducing the gap between the top and bottom) and reduce the level of poverty and inequality
- Be high enough to make a material difference to people's lives, including reducing the risk of destitution
- Raise the level of universality in the social security system, while reducing reliance on means testing
- Be affordable
- Minimise losses for low-income households (some losses to some households is inevitable with any system change)

<sup>16</sup> <https://leftfootforward.org/2018/09/the-practical-response-to-our-societys-widening-inequality-a-partial-basic-income/>

- Minimise the amount of disruption involved in moving to a new system of income support (by retaining much of the existing system at least initially and grafting basic income payments onto it)
- Enjoy broad public support (essential for political feasibility) based around an extensive national debate and public education. (p. 15)

The report proposes two complementary routes to implementation. The first, 'model 1', is a 'fast track' route, which would establish a Citizen's Basic Income scheme with a working age Citizen's Basic Income of £60 per week, more for over 65s (£175 per week), and less for children (£40 per week). Child Benefit and the Basic State Pension would be abolished, but other benefits would be retained and recalculated. In order to avoid net household income losses for poorer households, a new Income Tax rate of 15% would be implemented for the first £11,850 of taxable income; and to provide a net income increase for poorer households, the scheme would disregard the first £25 of Citizen's Basic Income for means-testing purposes. The Income Tax Personal Allowance would be abolished and National Insurance Contributions would be charged on all earned income at 12%, and Income Tax rates would rise by 3p in the £1. Poverty and inequality would be substantially reduced, there would be a negligible number of household net income losses among low income households, fewer households would be on means-tested benefits, and the mean disposable income of households in the lowest income decile would rise by 108%. A useful graph shows that the vast majority of household losses would be among the higher income deciles. The net costs would be £28bn per annum. Lansley and Reed make suggestions as to where the money could be found, and point out that the sum required would simply reverse the cuts made to the social security budget since 2010. Options for phasing in the initial 'fast track' scheme are offered, from a starting scheme based on converting the Income Tax Personal Allowance into a cash payment for all, to complete implementation within a single parliament.

Lansley and Reed's second route, 'model 2', the 'slow track', would build a 'citizens' wealth fund' to the value of £650bn, the proceeds of which would fund a growing Citizen's Basic Income. This would enable the original 'partial' Citizen's Basic Income to become a subsistence-level Citizen's Basic Income, paying £80 per week to working age adults, and generating significant additional decreases in poverty and inequality and in net income losses among low

income households. The mean household disposable income in the lowest income decile would rise a further 24% to 132% above the current level.

The report suggests that the second slower route would result in a 'durable' Citizen's Basic Income. However, this might not necessarily be so, because the proceeds of a citizens' wealth fund could easily be diverted to some other purpose, or contributions to the fund could cease. It is rather the initial route that would be more likely to produce a durable Citizen's Basic Income, simply because the Citizen's Basic Incomes would be mainly funded by changes to the current tax and benefits system – funds that would have to be used for the Citizen's Basic Incomes if households were not to suffer unsustainable losses - and not by funds that could be put to other uses. Political realities would protect the initial 'fast track' Citizen's Basic Income, but not the additional 'slow track' one.

Appendices describe the microsimulation process by which the results for model 1 have been obtained; the impact on pensioners of models 1 and 2; and the effects of converting the Income Tax Personal Allowance into a flat rate cash payment.

One minor quibble: the Scottish pilot project is conducting a 'feasibility study', not 'detailed proposals'.<sup>17</sup>

As always with Lansley's and Reed's publications, this is a most useful contribution to the Citizen's Basic Income debate. It will be particularly useful to the now extensive discussion about the feasibility and implementation of Citizen's Basic Income, and as a recognition that a consensus is emerging around the kind of initial Citizen's Basic Income scheme that it would be feasible to implement in the short to medium term.

**Disabled People Against Cuts, *UBI: Solution or Illusion?*** Free to download at <https://dpac.uk.net/2019/01/universal-basic-income/>

This report begins with an argument for Citizen's Basic Income (here called a Universal Basic Income, or UBI):

there is an obvious attraction to the idea of UBI as an automatic payment administered without assessments. Supporters argue that with everyone - regardless of income status or disability - in

receipt of a universal payment, it could lead to the de-stigmatisation of social security, ending the scapegoating of benefit claimants and associated hostility towards disabled people. (p. 2).

Then follows a series of arguments against Citizen's Basic Income. For instance:

there is no precedent for replacing an existing complex social security system with UBI. (p. 2)

True. Neither was there a precedent for the National Health Service or Family Allowance/Child Benefit until they happened.

Concerns have also been raised that funding a UBI would entail cuts to benefits and services that "vulnerable" groups including disabled people now receive. (p. 3)

Yes, that could happen: but not if a revenue neutral Citizen's Basic Income scheme were to be implemented.

The report criticises a number of particular Citizen's Basic Income schemes: the World Bank's suggestion of a modest Basic Income, and Finland's pilot project (on the basis of motivations attributed to the groups behind them); Charles Murray's scheme that would abolish the rest of the welfare state (rightly criticised); the Ontario experiment (which wasn't a Citizen's Basic Income anyway); the Indian pilot project (rightly stated not to be a model for a developed country: but nobody ever claimed that it was); the Dauphin experiment (rightly stated not to have been a Citizen's Basic Income experiment); the Royal Society of Arts scheme (correctly accused of imposing net income losses on low income households); and Reform Scotland's proposal (correctly accused of being financially infeasible).

The report then turns to entirely justifiable criticisms of the ways in which disabled people have been treated by the UK's current benefits system, but follows this with the rather less justifiable statement that 'into this context, the introduction of UBI, replacing a targeted system with universal coverage, is likely to entrench growing inequality and the struggle to survive' (p. 18). No account is taken of illustrative schemes that would reduce inequality. As for the authors' treatment of Annie Miller's statement that 'both housing and disability benefits are very much in need of revision but are beyond the scope of this book': they might have done better to have agreed with the first half of it rather than criticising the second part, which is entirely justifiable in a book about Citizen's Basic Income. The report mentions neither Simon Duffy's Centre for Welfare Reform's

<sup>17</sup> Coryn Barclay, Julie McLachlan, and Mhairi Paterson, Exploring the practicalities of a basic income pilot, Dunfermline: Carnegie UK Trust, 2019, <https://www.carnegieuktrust.org.uk/publications/exploring-the-practicalities-of-a-basic-income-pilot/>

proposal of 'Basic Income Plus'<sup>18</sup> nor the research paper 'Universal Basic Income: A psychological impact assessment', by Psychologists for Social.<sup>19</sup>

The report has fallen into a trap. It is always possible to find proposals for Citizen's Basic Income schemes that support objections to the idea; and it is always possible to frame objections so that Citizen's Basic Income schemes can be criticised. For instance:

The Citizen's Income Trust ... advocate that both disability and housing benefits would need to remain outside a model of UBI – which would mean continuing assessments and, potentially, conditionality for disabled people. (p. 3)

First of all, the Citizen's Basic Income Trust does not advocate this. It has published a feasible and easily implementable illustrative scheme that would leave means-tested benefits in place. What the report does not mention is that many individuals and households would no longer have to claim means-tested benefits because their Citizen's Basic Incomes would reduce the need for them; and that any households that found themselves no longer on means-tested benefits would no longer experience their conditionalities. And yes, remaining means-tested benefits would still have stigmatising conditionalities attached to them: but that would not be the fault of the Citizen's Basic Income.

There is nothing unusual in authors taking a stance and then finding ways to justify it. That is the stuff of politics, and most of the report is of this nature. The one seriously problematic criticism – and one that the authors should be ashamed of – is the suggestion that research that shows that a particular Citizen's Basic Income scheme would not impose losses on low income households should not be believed because 'we were told the same thing about Universal Credit and that has proved not to be true' (p. 20). This is evidence of an approach that takes no account of meticulous, peer-reviewed research.

The report asks all of the right questions in relation to Citizen's Basic Income and disabled people. It is unfortunate that the authors have not then asked whether an unconditional income is in principle a good idea: and particularly unfortunate because their main problem with the current benefits system is its conditionalities. Instead of taking an entirely negative approach and then justifying it, the authors could

<sup>18</sup> <https://centreforwelfarereform.org/library/by-az/basic-income-plus.html>

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.centreforwelfarereform.org/uploads/attachment/541/universal-basic-income-a-psychological-impact-assessment.pdf>

have taken a more positive approach. They could have recognised that in principle a Citizen's Basic Income would represent the unconditionality that they wish to see, and they could then have worked with existing illustrative schemes and their researchers to craft a Citizen's Basic Income scheme that would respond to their list of questions. To repeat what Ellen Clifford, the author, writes at the beginning of the report:

There is an obvious attraction to the idea of UBI as an automatic payment administered without assessments. Supporters argue that with everyone - regardless of income status or disability - in receipt of a universal payment, it could lead to the de-stigmatisation of social security, ending the scapegoating of benefit claimants and associated hostility towards disabled people. (p. 2).

If the authors decide to take on this positive task then the Citizen's Basic Income Trust would of course be more than pleased to work with them.

**David Graeber, *Bullshit Jobs: The Rise of Pointless Work, and What We Can Do About It*, Penguin Books, 2019, 368 pp, ISBN-13: 978-0141983479, pbk, £9.99**

If you are only interested in the reasons why David Graeber thinks that Universal Basic Income (UBI) is part of the solution to what he calls the 'bullshitization' of work, then you only need to read the last ten pages of this book. But then you would miss out on the other 250+ hugely entertaining and thought-provoking pages that precede this one single policy recommendation in the whole book. And concentrating on policy is precisely the sort of thing that he wants you to avoid. Instead, Graeber wants you to focus on the question of why it is that so many people in modern economies do work that they themselves consider to be, well, bullshit.

The book grew out of an article that Graeber wrote in 2013 and published in the anarchist website *Strike*. 'On the phenomenon of Bullshit Jobs' (<https://strikemag.org/bullshit-jobs/>) became something of an overnight sensation. It caused the site to crash due to traffic, it was translated into multiple languages, and reprinted all over the place. It inspired comment and debate. In the article, Graeber had given form to a hunch that he had that there was a large, and growing, number of jobs in the modern economy that appeared to consist of doing not very much at all: brand managers, PR consultants, corporate strategists, and other such professions, where the job appeared to consist of attending meetings, creating committees, writing reports, and

other activities whose main purpose seemed to be to keep the job-holders busy, but not much else.

The response to his article was so overwhelming that he, and others, looked further into it. A YouGov poll in the UK found that fully 37% of people thought that their jobs did not 'make a meaningful contribution to the world'. A further 15% were not sure. In Holland, the rate was even higher: around 40% of people thought there was no good reason for their jobs to exist.

The book sets out to answer the questions of what a bullshit job is (Chapter 1); what types of bullshit jobs there are (Chapter 2); why they are so pernicious (Chapters 3&4); why we are making more and more of them (Chapter 5); why no-one seems to care about their proliferation (Chapter 6); and, finally, what can possibly be done about it (Chapter 7).

*So, what is a bullshit job?*

A bullshit job is a form of paid employment that is so completely pointless, unnecessary or pernicious that even the employee cannot justify its existence even though, as part of the conditions of employment, the employee feels obliged to pretend that this is not the case. (p. 9).

There are two points to note in Graeber's definition. Firstly, this is not an issue of some 'higher authority' deciding what is bullshit work and what is not. It's about how people feel about the work they do. As Graeber says, 'If the preponderance of those engaged in a certain occupation privately believe their work is of no social value, one should proceed along the assumption that they are right' (p. 11). Secondly, the element of pretence. Graeber argues that this is one of the most debilitating aspects of bullshit work – he calls it 'spiritual violence'. It consists of everyone having to pretend to everyone else that they are engaged in some meaningful enterprise.

He then goes on to create a topology of bullshit jobs:

- Flunkies - Jobs created just to make other people look good or important.
- Goons - Jobs that exist because other organisations have them and so you need them too.
- Duct tapers - Jobs that only exist to paper over problems that no one wants to fix.
- Box tickers - Jobs that exist to create the illusion that something is being done which isn't really being done.
- Task Masters - Jobs that exist purely to assign tasks to other people or (worse still) to create

pointless tasks and then assign them to other people.

The book has numerous first-hand testimonies (by turns hilarious and poignant) from people describing their work and the reasons they consider it either simply pointless (being paid as a receptionist to answer the phone once a day and replenish a bowl of sweets), or even downright pernicious (telesales of financial products to often vulnerable people who don't need them and can't afford them).

Graeber draws heavily on anecdotal evidence that he himself has collected over the years. He set up an email address and encouraged people to communicate with him by this and other means (like social media). He readily admits that there is a problem of self-selection here, but argues that what statistical data exist (like the polls mentioned above) seem to bear out his evidence.

*Why this is bad*

Graeber argues that all this pointless working is not just wasteful but fundamentally soul-destroying. Humans are social animals whose sense of self is tied up, from an early age, in their sense of agency, of being able to have an impact on the world. Being forced to carry out tasks, day in day out, which they perceive as useless, and cannot avoid because it's their only means to survive, eats away at the core of who they are as human beings.

It also, Graeber argues, creates a society that is built on resentment - those engaged in bullshit work (which, paradoxically, is mostly well remunerated) resent those, like teachers or nurses, who are not engaged in bullshit work. Non-bullshit work is poorly remunerated, at least in part because those who do bullshit jobs see that as the price these people pay for daring to do useful work. But non-bullshit workers resent the well-paid bullshit workers. And everyone resents those who do not work, ostensibly because they are deficient or shirkers who have no right to any help from society, but secretly because 'how dare they not get either a bullshit job or one that doesn't pay the bills?'

*What is going on?*

On the face of it, all this is supremely counter-intuitive. After all, enterprises in efficient market economies are supposed to maximise returns on investment. Given that headcount is generally the biggest cost to an organisation, they should only be employing people they really need. And this, Graeber claims, is not a case of vast state bureaucracies stuffing their payrolls with non-existent jobs. 'The main difference between the public and private

sectors is not that either is more or less likely to generate pointless work ... [but that] ... pointless work in the private sector is likely to be much more closely supervised' (p. 5).

Graeber's answer is that modern economies are not driven by some kind of market capitalism, but rather by what he calls 'managerial feudalism', a sort of loot distribution system by which the wealth extracted by those at the top of the corporate feudal system is shared down networks of patronage which allow lower corporate barons to surround themselves with flunkies, goons, box-tickers, and the like; and so on down the food chain, keeping everyone happy and compliant. This is not about profit maximisation but about maintaining the social order.

*And what about Basic Income?*

Graeber alights on Citizen's/Universal Basic Income after admitting that the bullshitisation of work is very hard to tackle. There are no anti-bullshit jobs movements, and no-one, anywhere, is going to win votes with a campaign slogan that calls for job destruction. And of course, if anyone were ever to try to formalise what a bullshit job was in order to get rid of them, then this would spawn an even bigger industry of bullshit jobs to do the work!

'What Basic Income ultimately proposes is to detach livelihood from work' (p. 279), says Graeber. Once you are not compelled to choose between doing a bullshit job and starving, most people will be able to figure out for themselves which jobs are bullshit, which are not, and which they would rather be doing. And because Universal Basic Income is universal, it would do away with the army of people whose job currently is to assess who is and who is not deserving of public help while making it as difficult and humiliating as possible for them to access this help. For an anarchist like Graeber, this reduction in the power of the State is an added bonus.

Graeber's book delves into the various strands that are intertwined in our current attitude to work (religious, historical, genetic) and into the difficulties of changing some deeply ingrained patterns of behaviour that most of us aren't even aware of. But it has an ultimately optimistic message: People are naturally creative, industrious and empathetic. Every day we wake up and reinvent the world anew. And there is no reason why we cannot reinvent one that harnesses that creativity, empathy and industriousness in ways that do not require half of us to wake up every morning wondering why on earth we are about to go to work.

Daniel Mermelstein

**Hal Colebatch and Robert Hoppe (Eds), *Handbook on Policy, Process and Governing*, Edward Elgar, 2018, xiv + 516 pp, 1 78471 486 4, hbk, £195.** (The eBook version is priced from £36 from Google Play, ebooks.com and other eBook vendors, while in print the book can be ordered from the Edward Elgar Publishing website.)

*Handbook*: Originally a book small enough to be easily portable and intended to be kept close to hand, typically one containing a collection of passages important for reference or a compendium of information on a particular subject ... Later also more generally: any book (usually but not necessarily concise) giving information such as facts on a particular subject, guidance in some art or occupation, instructions for operating a machine, or information for tourists. (Oxford English Dictionary)

The editors of this volume have gathered a global cast of expert authors to create a genuine handbook, in the second dictionary meaning of the term. The chapters are thoroughly evidence-based; readers will gain new understandings of the policy process and be better able to exercise the art or occupation of operating the policy machine; and anyone reading the book will be able to orientate themselves within a wide variety of perspectives on the policy process, and will therefore be better able to navigate them.

The editors' introductory chapter states their initial agenda as an attempt to draw a map of how scholars have employed 'concepts, categories, practices and relationships' in order to understand the place of policy in 'generating collective action and, specifically, in the process of governing' (p. 3). Chapter 2 sees policy-making as the method by which authority-figures govern as they make decisions and those decisions are then put into practice by officials; chapter 3 understands government as the writing of policy documents, and points out that those documents function differently for academics and civil servants. Chapter 4 understands policy-making as problem-solving, finds social problems to be socially constructed, and therefore understands 'policy-making as problem-solving' to be a useful narrative rather than a linear process. Chapter 5 sees policy-making as a body of practices understood by relevant stakeholders, meaning that to study policy-making we need to study what different stakeholders actually do; and chapter 6 asks how policy-making relates to the past, the present, and the future, in order to understand it as a body of knowledge. These different perspectives on policy-making are correctly understood as different aspects of a complex process;

and the editors contribute a useful further perspective when they suggest that policy is the field lying between politics and administration.

Part II of the book pursues the agenda set in chapter 2: the understanding of policy as authoritative choice, with the different chapters exploring explanations of the policy process. Chapter 7 defends a 'stage' theory of policy-making; chapter 8 understands design as a constant process rather than as simply an initial stage; chapter 9 studies the way in which scholars have come to see the policy process as a constant choosing of policy instruments; chapter 10 explores the idea of implementation as policy-making, and finds it to be a multi-layered activity; and chapter 11 recognises that, in a more turbulent world, evaluation of policy outcomes as a part of the policy process has some significant challenges to meet. The overall impression delivered by this section of the book is that in a fast-changing world, policy-making methods suited to a more stable world require significant adaptation, and that it will be essential to see policy-making as a constant process rather than as a linear list of stages.

Part III sets out from the insight that policy-making is never an individual affair: rather, policy is made across networks of individuals and organisations that relate to each other in complex ways. Chapter 12 tries to understand how policy actors relate to each other, and whether the clusters that emerge can be categorised; chapter 13 learns lessons from the theory that advocacy coalitions based on shared values can provoke the formation of counter-coalitions based on alternative values; chapter 14 sets out from the theory that a 'problem stream', a 'policy stream' and a 'politics stream' moving in the same direction can create a window for policy change; and chapter 15 studies the relationships between different 'policy workers', and particularly bureaucrats and professional advisers. The overall theme here is that the different understandings of the policy process function as heuristics: simplified but still useful frameworks for understanding a complex field.

Part IV sees the policy process as a 'making sense' of what happens. It is 'collective puzzling' about 'what is normal, what is problematic, what demands collective attention, what is the problem, what is the source of the problem, what forms of response are appropriate, and who should be involved in accomplishing the response' (p. 9). Chapter 16 shows how important the process of framing problems is to the policy process, and how frames can be used to prevent or to achieve compromise; chapter 17 studies agenda formation and change, and finds the early stages of agenda-setting to be sufficiently fluid to enable important choices to be made at that stage;

chapter 18 understands the policy process as the construction of narratives that can drive policy trajectories (for instance, the 'war on drugs'); chapter 19 studies the way in which policy ideas are transferred from one situation to another, with substantial change occurring during the transfer process; chapter 20 discusses how the news media follow their own agendas and therefore relate rather obliquely to the policy process, preferring to publicise problems than to study policies and their long-term effects; and chapter 21 studies the silo effect of social media, which can prevent relationships between alternative problematisations. Chapter 22 regards the process of problematisation as intrinsic to the policy process, and shows that issue selection and the definition of problems are ways in which society charts its way towards social change.

The final section of the book, on the limits of policy, begins with chapter 23 on how governing has often been about continuity and the tweeking of existing policy, whereas more recent ideological approaches to government have resulted in significant policy shifts. Chapter 24 finds that a variety of factors determine whether stasis or change occurs, and suggests that what is required is approaches that integrate reflexive agency, interactions, and changing context. Chapter 25 shows how the policy process is substantially driven by the particular social and economic situation in which a jurisdiction finds itself; and chapter 26 shows how existing policies, understood as institutions, affect the policy process and therefore future policy.

The final chapter of the book surveys the ground that the book has covered, and draws some conclusions. The editors find that new understandings that recognise the complexity of the policy-making process still struggle to make headway against a longstanding understanding of a rational and linear account of policy-making; and that researchers tend to reach conclusions that will endear them to policy practitioners.

Research approaches which suggest that there was not much that could be achieved by the exercise of authoritative choice, and that the most effective courses of action would not generate much kudos for the government, would not be as well received. (p. 496)

The editors call for research grounded in practice, and suggest that that will discover a diversity of institutionalised concerns, in effect rivals for attention and access to resources. In the policy process, they compete for resources, so they have an interest in winning, but they have an equally important interest

in maintaining an orderly process in which they continue to be significant players. (p. 498)

The book contains a few proof-reading and formatting errors; there are useful introductions to each of the sections; and there is a thorough index. The high price of the book will restrict it to academic libraries, but, in that context it will be enormously useful to scholars in every conceivable policy field.

The importance of this book for those involved in the Citizen's Basic Income debate is that it reveals the policy process to be a complex and constantly changing field of activity in which every participant has influence. The challenge is therefore to engage with the policy process in as many different ways as possible, in the knowledge that every initiative will have influence. A lesson to learn, though, is that the complexity of the field means that any intervention can have unintended effects as well as intended ones.

A further relevance of the book's diverse understanding of a diverse policy process is this: The Citizen's Basic Income debate is relatively unusual in historical terms in that it tests a proposal against societal and economic problems rather than setting out from problems and seeking solutions: but this is precisely the kind of non-linear policy-making that the book takes as much of its agenda. In a complex and changing world, not only would Citizen's Basic Income respond to many of the issues facing our societies and our economies, but it also meshes more easily with today's policy process than it did with yesterday's. If ever there is a second edition of this important book, then the editors might consider including a chapter titled 'Starting with the solution'.

**Marcello Natili, *The Politics of Minimum Income: Explaining path departure and policy departure in the age of austerity*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2019, xix + 318 pp, hbk, 3-319-96210-8, £64.99**

This book began life as a PhD thesis based on numerous interviews in Italy and Spain relating to the politics of Minimum Income Schemes: that is, benefits designed to prevent household incomes falling below specified levels. The UK equivalents would be Universal Credit and the legacy means-tested benefits: so something very different from Citizen's Basic Income.

The period in view is the mid-1980s to 2015, during which Spain introduced regional Minimum Income Schemes across the whole country, whereas Italy has only experienced a few short-lived regional schemes, and now has a minimal national scheme, which Natili

describes as 'peculiar' (p. 3). Natili sets himself two questions: Why did Spain and Italy introduce Minimum Income Schemes after not having had them? And why did Spain and Italy take such different policy journeys? In order to answer the questions, Natili studies two Spanish regions and two Italian regions, and traces the histories of their Minimum Income Schemes. In the process, he deepens our understanding of the politics of social assistance, and finds that traditional welfare theory struggles to explain the different paths taken in Spain and Italy: in the first case, introduction and gradual institutionalisation, and, in the second, introduction and policy reversals. In both countries the poverty problem looked much the same, both had similar benefits systems, both had similar rudimentary charitable provision for alleviating poverty, both had similar governance structures for benefits, and both had developed more flexible employment markets – so all of the factors that would normally be used by traditional welfare theories to predict policy directions look much the same, which meant that traditional theories could not explain the fact that in Spain regional Minimum Income Schemes were expanded, whereas in Italy they were closed down, in both cases by conservative governments.

Following the introductory chapter, chapter 2 surveys different benefits systems, finds existing theories unable to explain the different policy directions in Spain and Italy, and develops Natili's own theoretical approach. In order to provide an explanation for Spain's and Italy's different policy directions, he develops an understanding of the situation as policy actors attempting to achieve 'credit' in what we might think of as an economy in which voters and interest groups exercise demand, and political parties supply what is required. Political parties attempt to achieve 'credit' from voters and interest groups, and the credit-claiming dynamics determine policy directions. Natili suggests that it is the difference in the dynamics that lead to different policy outcomes, so he studies the complex demand and supply configurations in both Spain and Italy. Chapter 3 describes in detail the minimum income protection structures in Spain and Italy, and the different ways in which those have evolved; chapters 4 and 5 provide detailed evidence on the development of Minimum Income Schemes in two Spanish regions and two Italian regions; chapter 6 applies the credit-dynamics theory to the different trajectories; and chapter 7 applies the theory to other European countries' Minimum Income Schemes, and to the recent implementation of a national scheme in Italy, and

Natili finds that all of these developments be explained by his theory.

Natili suggests that the reasons for Minimum Income Schemes becoming a live issue are the almost universal austerity agenda subsequent to the financial crisis and the increasing flexibilisation of the employment market. In this context, Minimum Income Schemes can result in political credit, and at the same time their restriction can also generate credit. Where the balance falls will depend on the political configuration of the country, and the differential strengths of different demands from voters and interest groups. If demand is weak or fragmented then there is little credit to be gained by implementing Minimum Income Schemes. Where demand for Minimum Income Schemes is strong, the country's political configuration will determine whether political consensus develops or parties compete to establish Minimum Income Schemes. Demand might be as much for rolling back Minimum Income Schemes as for establishing them, so political parties might compete to gain credit from doing that.

The book is full of interview and other research evidence, each chapter is well referenced, and the index is generally thorough: although it is odd that there are numerous mentions of universal benefits in the book, but no index entry for 'universal'.

The book makes a persuasive case, although readers will need to be aware that it is a partial one. The reason for this is that it makes a common assumption that policy processes are rational and orderly. This is often not the case, and there is now substantial evidence of the chaotic nature of policy processes and of multiple policy accidents which appear to follow no theoretical model. Natili has been fortunate to find two policy pathways that fit a theory that he has developed. This is a substantial achievement: and future researchers might well be able to employ the theory to explain other divergent policy pathways. But just as Natili has found that existing theories could not explain the pathways that he was studying, so future researchers will find that Natili's theory will not explain the policy changes that they are studying. To take just two factors that have caused policy change in the past: policymakers possess their own ideological commitments, and these can be powerful policy drivers in circumstances that are potentially sympathetic to those commitments; and the ways in which politicians frame issues can strongly influence public opinion, generating feed-back mechanisms, enabling politicians to meet the demands that they themselves have generated.

But having said that, Natili's theory will always be worth considering as a possible explanation for policy events, so it is a theory that those who study the political feasibility of Citizen's Basic Income should be aware of. Questions that might be asked are these: Where is the demand for Citizen's Basic Income? Is it consistent and widespread, or is it fragmented? What credit would be gained by policy actors if they implemented a Citizen's Basic Income? And perhaps just as importantly: What credit would be gained by abolishing a Citizen's Basic Income?

**Coryn Barclay, Julie McLachlan, and Mhairi Paterson, *Exploring the practicalities of a basic income pilot*, Dunfermline: Carnegie UK Trust, 2019, 1 912908 04 2,**  
<https://www.carnegieuktrust.org.uk/publications/exploring-the-practicalities-of-a-basic-income-pilot/>

This report is the result of ongoing discussions among local authorities about the possibility of organising Citizen's Basic Income pilot projects in Scotland, and of a visit by eight members of the Scottish Basic Income Feasibility Study Steering Group to the 2018 BIEN Congress in Finland, at which they were able to hear about existing experiments of various kinds – and particularly the experiment that has just completed in Finland – and to discuss their plans with experts in the field.

At the beginning of the report, Citizen's Basic Income is correctly defined: 'paid at regular intervals ... paid without a requirement to work or to demonstrate willingness to work; paid on an individual basis ... not be means-tested ... paid to all, without means test' (p. 6). The report outlines a number of reasons for exploring the feasibility of Citizen's Basic Income – rising inequality, economic insecurity, and employment market precarity; discusses a variety of completed, current and planned experiments around the world; and draws lessons for the discussions about pilot projects in Scotland. In particular, the authors study the ways in which various experiments have been framed, in order to discover the experiments elsewhere with framings similar to the aims of the Scottish experiments. As a particular interest in Scotland is to tackle poverty and inequality, the authors suggest that the Ontario experiment, which had the same aim, exhibits a number of similarities to the Scottish context.

Unfortunately a certain amount of confusion is created in the mind of the reader when the Ontario experiment is discussed (p. 14). The researchers are aware that the Ontario incomes were means-tested

and household-based, but they still call it a Citizen's Basic Income, which it clearly isn't. For instance, they say that 'The experiment is a Negative Income Tax model due to CBI decreasing by \$0.50 for every dollar earned through employment'. The problem is that it is not a CBI that is decreasing: it is a means-tested Negative Income Tax that is decreasing. It is possible that the researchers have been taken in by the fact that the experiment in Ontario was called a 'Basic Income' experiment. There is of course nothing that anyone can do to stop the organisers of an experiment using 'Basic Income' with a meaning entirely different from the usual meaning of the term – a meaning well described on page 6 of the report: but perhaps the authors ought to have been clearer that what was being tested in Ontario was not a Citizen's Basic Income, and they should not have used the term 'Citizen's Basic Income' on the pages about the Ontario experiment.

But this is the only glitch in the report. The report contains a good section on the feasibility tests that a Citizen's Basic Income scheme would need to pass, and that therefore a pilot would also need to pass. What the authors say about the importance of understanding the political cycle is a particularly useful element of the report, as is their understanding of the necessity of careful forward planning for the evaluation of pilot projects. In relation to institutional feasibility, the researchers are of course correct to note that tax and social security authorities' participation will be essential. A feasible nationwide Citizen's Basic Income scheme would require existing tax and benefits systems to be altered, so a genuine pilot of a scheme that could rolled out nationwide would need those systems to be changed for the pilot communities. The report is therefore correct to recognise the importance of UK central government collaboration to the success of a pilot project.

The Scottish Local Authorities' feasibility study on Citizen's Basic Income pilot projects is a most welcome initiative, and deserves everyone's support – particularly that of the UK government. We look forward to seeing progress on that front.

**Karl Widerquist, *A Critical Analysis of Basic Income Experiments for Researchers, Policymakers, and Citizens*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2018, xi + 167 pp, 3 030 03848 9, hbk, £49.99**

One of the causes of the current lively debate on Citizen's Basic Income, at least in the UK, was a piece of fake news: the news, about three years ago,

that Finland was about to pay a Citizen's Basic Income to all of its citizens. The result was a discussion of Citizen's Basic Income on BBC2's *Newsnight*, radio interviews, and a Radio 4 *Money Box Live* programme. The source of the fake news might have been an article in the *New Statesman* that simply got it wrong. What had actually been promised was a pilot project. That began in January 2017 and finished in December 2018, initial results have been published, and we await further results. This was of course nothing like as significant as a Citizen's Basic Income for every individual in Finland, but paying an unconditional income for two years for two thousand randomly selected unemployed individuals was still an important event. Pilot projects matter. It is therefore a pleasure to see a book entirely about Citizen's Basic Income experiments from one of the acknowledged authorities on Citizen's Basic Income.

Widerquist's book's introductory chapter asks that researchers should plan their experiments in relation to the questions that they wish to answer. Chapter 2 distinguishes between Citizen's Basic Income and Negative Income Tax, and this chapter and chapter 5 conclude that the latter is easier to experiment with in more developed countries. Whether the results of a Negative Income Tax experiment can tell us what would happen if a Citizen's Basic Income were to be implemented is debatable.

In chapter 3 Widerquist discusses terminology and testing methods. He explicitly avoids 'pilot project' terminology, because that might imply that the policy being tested will be implemented. Instead, 'experiment' terminology is employed with a broad definition. A tighter definition is employed for 'Randomized Controlled Trial' (RCT), with Widerquist declining to use it for saturation studies, in which a whole community receives Citizen's Basic Incomes, because comparing a single community subject to a new policy with one not subject to it does not constitute the random selection of the statistically significant sample of communities that would be required. The Finland selection of two thousand individuals from across the country did constitute an RCT, whereas although the Namibian experiment was not one, and there was not even a control village, the results obtained can still be regarded as significant. Widerquist's view is that both RCTs and saturation studies are useful for different reasons, and that both need to be carried out: a good example of the balance to be found in much of this book.

Chapter 4 describes some of the common difficulties encountered in any social experiment (such as the Hawthorn effect, in which an experiment can end up

measuring the effect of researcher observation on a community rather than the effect of the policy ostensibly being tested). Chapter 6 reviews the US and Canadian Negative Income Tax experiments of the 1970s, and shows how contemporary political and public misunderstanding of the results meant that the positive outcomes were only appreciated more than thirty years later, as the beginning of the all too brief chapter 7 shows. The rest of chapter 7 reviews the conduct and results of the important Namibian and Indian saturation studies. Chapter 8 discusses some current experiments, and warns that researchers should be prepared for negative employment effects – so it is of interest that the first results of the Finland experiment, released after the publication of this book, show no employment effect, which might suggest that the employment-reducing effect of the secure income was balanced by the employment-enhancing effect of lower marginal deduction rates. We await further results from Finland.

Chapter 9 is a useful discussion of the reasons why Citizen's Basic Income experiments might be held. The last reason listed might be the most significant: politicians agree to an experiment because they feel a need to respond to a growing demand for a Citizen's Basic Income, don't wish to risk implementing one, and know that holding a small experiment will successfully put off further discussion of implementation of a nationwide Citizen's Basic Income until the experiment has been evaluated. Chapter 10 reiterates the vulnerability of experiments to misunderstanding of the results, and develops a point already made in chapter 1, that researchers should keep the questions to be answered in mind and should therefore undertake a constant dialectic between the questions to be answered and the design of the experiment. Precisely which questions are being addressed is a crucial question, and it will always need to be made clear that experiments can only answer a limited subset of the questions that various interested parties might be asking.

Chapter 11 argues that public debate about Citizen's Basic Income is mainly about ethical concerns: an issue to which an experiment can contribute little – although perhaps more might have been said about the connection between experimental employment effects and ethical issues related to the presumed negative employment effects of Citizen's Basic Income. Chapter 12 again emphasises the importance of being clear about the questions that an experiment might be able to answer, and about how research results will respond to those questions.

Chapters 13 to 16 list claims for and against Citizen's Basic Income, and finds that experiments are not very

good at responding to them; and chapter 17 encourages researchers to undertake a feasible experiment as close as possible to the one that they wish to carry out if the experiment that they might wish to carry out is not feasible for one reason or another. Chapter 18 addresses the question as to whether experiments should be held, notes that they are being held, and suggests that the best possible use should be made of those being carried out. The final chapter suggests that experimental results should be published in such a way as to respond to the questions that interested parties are asking.

A clarification: Widerquist accuses microsimulation of being a 'highly imperfect method' (p. 123) in relation to employment market behaviour. Yes, it is, because if the microsimulation model is used to calculate marginal deduction rates, and those are then employed to estimate behavioural change, then it is in that final step that presuppositions enter the evaluation, and those can be flawed. For other purposes microsimulation is the best method available, and in fact functions like a practical experiment – which might have been said. A microsimulation programme has coded into it a country's tax and benefits regulations, and it has passed through it financial data on a massive and statistically significant sample of the population (in the UK, the Family Resources Survey sample is 0.1% of the entire population). More accurately than any other method, microsimulation can tell us how much a Citizen's Basic Income scheme would cost, how it would affect poverty and inequality indices, how many household income gains and losses it would cause, and where in the income range those would occur, how many households would no longer find themselves on which benefits, and so on. If those are the questions that need to be answered, then microsimulation is the best experiment available.

A minor quibble: Whether the unconditional income implemented in Iran by accident, or such existing unconditional incomes as the UK's Child Benefit, should be regarded as Citizen's Basic Income experiments is an interesting question, but they should at least have been discussed.

Widerquist's book will not be the end of the, sometimes vociferous, arguments about the usefulness of experiments and about how they should be carried out, but it will be essential reading for anyone planning an experiment. It is an important contribution to the Citizen's Basic Income literature.