

ABSTRACTS

Abstracts

Philippe Van Parijs: Basic income: a simple and powerful idea for the 21st century

A basic income (or demogrant) is an income paid by a political community to all its members on an individual basis, without means test or work requirement. This article surveys the various forms the basic income proposal has taken and how they relate to kin ideas; synthesizes the central case for basic income, as a strategy against both poverty and unemployment; examines the question of whether and in what sense a universal basic income is affordable; and discusses the most promising next steps towards it, both in the North and in the South..

Ulrich Mückenberger, Claus Offe, and Ilona Ostner: A basic income guaranteed by the state: a need of the moment in social policy

In this chapter we wish to defend the thesis that a basic income guaranteed by the state is a social policy necessity; that, given the present and foreseeable employment crisis, its introduction fulfills the obligations of a social state; and that, even under these circumstances, such a basic guarantee for all citizens can be realized and also financed. The plea for a universal basic guarantee entails a fundamental change of perspective. It should be possible to make the right to an income independent of the fact and extent of an individual's incomeearning activity. As a first step toward a universal basic guarantee we recommend that a guaranteed minimum, which already exists in security and transfer systems, be systematized, and then gradually transferred to those security systems which do not yet include one. In the course of this-harmonization a sociocultural standard of need can be defined which can serve as the basic form of a guaranteed income for all.

Julieta Elgarte: Basic income and the gendered division of labour

A basic income has been regarded as a policy that could advance gender justice because of its ability to protect women from some of the consequences of the gendered division of labour. I argue, though, that full justice for women plausibly entails the abolishment of traditional gender roles and that a feminist assessment of basic income should then look at its ability to help us move away from traditional gender roles. I also argue that basic income could meet the demands we should place on our income security policy as we move towards a gender-just society; and I defend basic income against the objection that, given current gender norms, it might lead to a reinforcement of the gendered division of labour.

Barbara R. Bergmann: A Swedish-style welfare state or basic income?

State provision of “merit goods” and of narrowly targeted cash payments has higher priority than large universal cash grants. Analysis of the Swedish budget shows that advanced countries do not have the taxing capacity to do both at once. Other problems with cash payments schemes include the disincentive to work for pay, reducing taxpaying capacity, and retrograde effects on gender equality. After the achievement of a welfare state, rises over time in productivity may gradually open up room in the national budget for universal cash payments.

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