

Pursuing Social Justice:

How Might a Universal Basic Income or Federal Jobs Guarantee Help Women?

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Abstract

Welfare policies in the United States reinforce sexism, racism, and classism, and thereby oppress women. When discussing alternative policies, scholars and political players should not just consider economic consequences. They should also emphasize the social consequences of potential policies, namely how effectively they would combat women's oppression. In this paper I consider two proposed policies, federal jobs guarantees (FJG) and universal basic income (UBI). I use the framework established in *Justice and the Politics of Difference* by Iris Marion Young and her explanation of the five faces of oppression to evaluate how FJG and UBI may help or harm women. I also analyze recent public opinion polling and FJG and UBI pilot programs to determine the likelihood of the U.S. implementing similar policies. This paper answers the following questions: Which policy, FJG or UBI, would more effectively lessen women's oppression? Which is more likely to be implemented? Should those concerned with women's oppression favor UBI, FJG, or a combination of the two? My theoretical analysis shows that UBI would more effectively combat women's oppression, but public opinion polling and international pilot programs suggest that FJG is more likely to be implemented. This presents a dilemma for advocates who wish to prioritize vulnerable groups' needs while focusing on realistic goals. The social justice framework I adopt in this paper helps to resolve these conflicts. Using this framework, I conclude that UBI should remain a long-term goal in our transition to a more just society because it more effectively combats women's oppression. Still, political advocates should take seriously other policies such as FJG which still account for women's needs and reduce harm done to them. These conclusions contribute to ongoing debate over these policies and demonstrate how researchers and advocates can analyze policies within a social justice framework that prioritizes the needs of our most vulnerable populations.

Introduction

United States welfare policies oppress women. They reinforce gender roles; treat women differently based on race, class, and marital status; restrict poor women's freedom; and dismiss women's contributions to society. Partly due to these policies, women continue to face injustices such as poverty and violence. Two policies that may help ameliorate these injustices include a Federal Jobs Guarantee (FJG) and a Universal Basic Income (UBI). Under FJG, the federal government would guarantee every adult a well-paying job that provides medical benefits and adequate pay for rent, transportation, and food. UBI offers an alternative to a jobs-centered approach to poverty alleviation under which the government would give every adult a sum of money unconditionally. These policies are not mutually exclusive. Some, such as journalist Sean McElwee, suggest that we should implement both.

It is crucial to discuss the social, not just the economic, costs and consequences of these potential policies. Recognizing the relationship between the economic and the social, rather than prioritizing the former, is necessary for a proper discussion of UBI and FJG. I adopt the premise that economic injustice necessarily coexists with social injustice, and vice versa.¹ It is essential to discuss these forms of injustices from an intersectional perspective which accounts for the ways in which multiple axes of oppression impact women—particularly those who are not heterosexual, White, or well-off. Due to their positionality within a society characterized by white supremacy, heteropatriarchy, and classism, these women will experience qualitatively

¹ Iris Marion Young, "Unruly Categories: A Critique of Nancy Fraser's Dual Systems Theory," in *Adding Insult to Injury: Nancy Fraser Debates Her Critics*, ed. Kevin Olson (London: Verso, 2008), 89-106.

different forms of oppression than do more privileged women.² Those concerned with justice for all women must adopt an intersectional approach when addressing injustice and strive to ensure that policies' material aspects are not considered separately from their social consequences.

Based on this premise, this paper emphasizes the importance of centering vulnerable groups' needs, with a particular focus on women due to their unique experiences under American welfare policies. I do not attempt to provide a detailed plan to implement UBI or FJG, which other writers and commentators have addressed. I instead ask how advocates and political figures should discuss and evaluate public policies. Which policy—FJG or UBI—would most effectively combat women's oppression? Which is more likely to be implemented? Should those concerned with gender injustice advocate for UBI, FJG, or a combination of the two?

Advocates for UBI and FJG fall into three camps—those emphasizing poverty, freedom, and democratic citizenship rights. Philippe Van Parijs has presented what has become the most popular argument for UBI. He argues for a “real libertarian” approach that focuses on “real freedom for all.”³ Real freedom requires security, individual self-ownership, and the opportunity to do whatever one wishes. He argues that if income is as important as we think, real freedom depends on both rights and one's means. This includes the ability to purchase or consume and to live as one pleases. UBI would secure this freedom.⁴

² Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought* (New York: Routledge, 2000). See also Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw, “Mapping the Margins: intersectionality, identity politics, and violence against women of color,” *Stanford Law Review* 43, no. 6 (1991): 1241-1299.

³ Philippe Van Parijs, *Real freedom for all: what (if anything) can justify capitalism?* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 25.

⁴ Parijs, *Real freedom for all*, 30-33.

Kathi Weeks echoes Parijs's calls for freedom, but from a feminist and Marxist perspective. She argues that we should implement UBI because of its power as a critique, reform, and provocation. UBI would critique the link between family or household form and income and reject women's dependence on wages or marriage. As a reform, UBI would address the quantity and quality of waged labor, unemployment, underemployment, and reduce our dependence on work. The demand for UBI also points to the future and serves as a provocation to freedom. Unlike Van Parijs, Weeks defines freedom as the time and space for invention. Implementing UBI would provoke our imaginations and desires, allowing us to envision a postwork world and admit our longing for more money, more time, and more freedom.⁵

Other authors who write about UBI focus on poverty. Brian Barry, for instance, argues for a "pragmatic and principled" approach to UBI, meaning that he focuses on the ends that UBI might achieve.⁶ Pragmatists like Barry would not oppose, for instance, eligibility requirements for UBI. In contrast, authors who argue for a right to UBI on the basis of equal democratic citizenship believe that making this right conditional negates its purpose. The rights-oriented authors most relevant to this paper are those who advocate for UBI to secure women's equality. Carole Pateman argues that basic income facilitates democratization, or the creation of a more democratic society in which all citizens enjoy full standing, democratic rights, and individual freedom. UBI would help democratize the U.S. by breaking the link between marriage, income, employment, and citizenship. Pateman focuses on these institutions because they shape and limit

⁵ Kathi Weeks, *The Problem with Work: feminism, Marxism, antiwork politics, and postwork imaginaries* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011), 137-150.

⁶ Brian Barry, "Real Freedom and Basic Income," *Journal of Political Philosophy* 4, no. 3 (1996): 242-276.

women's citizenship and thereby empower women to exercise their citizenship rights.⁷ Breaking the link between them will enable individual autonomy and participation in democratic society.⁸ Just as universal "suffrage is the emblem of equal citizenship [...] a basic income is the emblem of full standing as a citizen, of citizenship that is of equal worth."⁹

Some feminist authors remain hesitant to endorse UBI fully or believe that it would not address inequalities among citizens. Elizabeth Anderson suggests that programs tailored to the needs of the disabled, disadvantaged, dependents, and caretakers would be more effective in delivering necessary goods and perhaps eventually gain greater acceptance than would UBI.¹⁰ Marjorie Cohen prefers alternatives to a guaranteed income, such as raising the minimum wage, providing child care, and improving labor protections.¹¹ She expresses concern that we will lose sight of women's poverty and needs if UBI provides an income to a household unit. It is for this reason that most pro-UBI authors argue that it should be administered as an individual right.

After activists in the mid-20th century failed to implement UBI, many who remained concerned with poverty and inequality looked instead to jobs guarantees. These authors argue for an FJG on similar grounds as those who advocate for UBI, although they emphasize freedom less. They primarily focus on reducing poverty and facilitating the exercise of democratic rights.

⁷ Carole Pateman, "Freedom and Democratization: Why basic income is to be preferred to basic capital," in *Democracy, feminism, welfare*, eds. Terrell Carver and Samuel A. Chambers (New York: Routledge, 2011), 164-179.

⁸ Carole Pateman, *Democracy, feminism, welfare*, eds. Terrell Carver and Samuel A. Chambers (New York: Routledge, 2011), 164-206.

⁹ Carole Pateman, "Freedom and Democratization," 166.

¹⁰ Elizabeth Anderson, "Optional Freedoms, in *What's Wrong with a Free Lunch?* ed. Philippe Van Parijs (Massachusetts: Beacon Press, 2001), 70-74.

¹¹ Marjorie Cohen, "A Good Idea Goes Bad: Guaranteed Income or Guaranteed Poverty?" *This Magazine* 21, no. 2 (1986): 19-23.

Economically-oriented authors such as Jared Bernstein aim to convince economists that full employment is, in fact, possible.¹² This argument lays the foundation for William Darity, among others, to explore FJG proposals. William Darity argues that we should establish a jobs guarantee to address employment needs and create long-term improvements in quality of life. Ensuring continuous employment would eliminate economic insecurity for Americans whose livelihoods depend on Wall Street, provide minimum conditions for employment in the private arena, and eliminate working poverty.¹³

Like advocates of UBI who argue for basic income as a democratic right, Helen Ginsburg insists that employment is a right. Recognizing that fact would require us to break from the neoliberal tradition that dominates current policy and redistribute power from big business to the middle- and working-class, as well as the working and non-working poor.¹⁴ Mathew Forstater also argues that an FJG is a crucial step in the fight for equal citizenship among different races. Many advocates, including civil rights leaders such as Martin Luther King, Jr., support FJG for this purpose due to the exceptionally high rates of unemployment in Black communities. If our goal is an inclusive economy that combats racial poverty, Black Americans need jobs.¹⁵

Pateman and Weeks are concerned about any policy that may reinforce the link between employment and income. Unlike other UBI advocates who see the potential in both FJG and

¹² Jared Bernstein, "Benefits of Full Employment," *New Economy* 6, no. 3 (1999): 141-145.

¹³ William Darity, "A Direct Route to Full Employment," *The Review of Black Political Economy* 37, no. 3 (2010): 179-181.

¹⁴ Helen Ginsburg, "Historical Amnesia: The Humphrey-Hawkins Act, Full Employment and Employment as a Right," *The Review of Black Political Economy* 39, no. 1 (2012): 121-136.

¹⁵ Mathew Forstater, "'Jobs for all': Another Dream of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.," *Forum for Social Economics* 31, no. 2 (2002): 45-52.

UBI, the theoretical premises that underlie FJG directly contradict Pateman's and Weeks' arguments. Pateman and Weeks believe that to achieve gender equity, we need to break the link between income and employment. Uncoupling people's income and standard of living from employment would challenge the mutually-reinforcing institutions of marriage, employment, and citizenship which subordinate women. These structures make "wives' standing as citizens" problematic because our social insurance system is based on the assumption that wives are both economic dependents and "lesser citizens whose entitlement to benefits depend[] on their private status instead of on their citizenship."¹⁶ Meanwhile, only paid employment has been considered work, while feminized caregiving tasks have been seen as irrelevant to citizenship.¹⁷ Thus, we need to look critically at the moral hazard of institutions that give incentives to men to avoid their fair share of the unpaid labor of caring for others; the connections between income and employment; marriage, employment, and citizenship; caring work and other work; and the meaning of work itself.¹⁸

Although authors who prioritize issues such as poverty alleviation and democratic rights offer compelling reasons to support UBI and FJG, U.S. history with welfare policy indicates that we need a new framework to evaluate these policy proposals. In this paper's first section I argue that our welfare state has reinforced the subordination of women based on race, gender, and class. We require new public policies that prioritize vulnerable women's needs. The second section explains why we should use a social justice framework to evaluate whether policies

¹⁶ Carole Pateman, "Democratizing Citizenship: Some Advantages of a Basic Income," *Politics & Society* 32, no. 1 (2004): 98.

¹⁷ Pateman, "Democratizing Citizenship," 98.

¹⁸ Pateman, "Democratizing Citizenship," 100.

prioritize these needs. Iris Marion Young's explanation of the five faces of oppression in *Justice and the Politics of Difference* provides a tool that centers on social justice and can help determine how effectively public policies would combat the oppression that social groups face. I use this framework to determine how effectively FJG or UBI could undermine the oppression women face.

The fourth section focuses on the likelihood that FJG and UBI will be implemented. Though UBI is the more favorable policy theoretically, analyzing American public and political opinion suggests that FJG is more likely to be implemented. This creates a dilemma for activists and policymakers who aim to promote economic and gender equity.

Historical Background

Racism, classism, and sexism plague U.S. welfare policies. Beginning with mothers' pensions, these policies have privileged whiteness, maleness, wealth, and heterosexuality to subordinate those who do not fit within these categories. To understand why we need radically different policies and a different way to evaluate their effectiveness, it is necessary to be familiar with the ways in which past policies have oppressed women. Those policies include mothers' pensions, New Deal work programs, the Social Security Act, and the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act.

The Progressive Era

Mothers' pensions marked the beginning of our welfare state. Progressive-era women reformers advocated for mothers to receive these pensions.¹⁹ Maternalist reformers believed that the real solution to poverty was for men to receive a family wage, that is, a wage earned by a

¹⁹ Gwendolyn Mink, *The Wages of Motherhood: Inequality in the Welfare State, 1917-1942* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1995), 28-29.

male breadwinner to support his family. When this support was absent, pensions replaced it for women with dependents.²⁰ The means-tested benefits were meant to help lift these households out of poverty without forcing mothers to work outside the home. The pensions affirmed the value of their recipients' domestic labor, but ultimately reflected and reinforced the sexism, racism, and xenophobia that pervaded this time.

The primary benefit of mothers' pensions was affirming the importance of caregiving. Reformers wanted women to receive the equivalent of a maternal wage for their labor rather than be forced to work outside the home. They recognized that, if "martial vigor" was the basis of men's citizenship, motherhood was the basis of women's.²¹ Unlike soldiers' pensions, though, mothers' pensions were contingent on whether recipients were deemed "deserving" of benefits.²² Receiving these pensions effectively depended on women's conjugal status, "intelligence, willingness to learn English, piety, celibacy, and full-time [...] domesticity."²³ Benefits were given to "morally worthy" and "assimilable mothers who bore no blame for the plights of their families."²⁴

With these traits in mind, reformers targeted immigrant women but neglected Black women entirely. Immigrant women's foreign cultures were associated with poverty, which the state tried to lessen by pressuring them to conform to White, middle-class standards to receive

²⁰ Mink, *The Wages of Motherhood*, 46.

²¹ Mink, *The Wages of Motherhood*, 123-126.

²² Mink, *The Wages of Motherhood*, 34.

²³ Mink, *The Wages of Motherhood*, 33.

²⁴ Mink, *The Wages of Motherhood*, 31.

benefits.²⁵ Meanwhile, reformers excluded Black mothers from maternal relief programs.²⁶ Reformers considered Black women unassimilable, “outside the elite white women’s paternalistic concept of the national community,” and thus irrelevant to maternalist legislation which “intended to assimilate women who had the potential of becoming citizens[.]”²⁷ Black women’s caregiving roles within their families have always been devalued in the U.S. The expectations and dignity associated with motherhood and domesticity have applied only to White women. Unlike more privileged women, however, who remained confined to domestic spheres and valued for their contributions to it, Black women have been forced to work outside of their homes, often as caregivers for White women’s children.²⁸ Thus, White women did not extend maternal benefits to Black mothers.

Maternalist reformers failed to design inclusive, supportive welfare policies because they adhered to patriarchal and racist family norms that dominated the Progressive Era.²⁹ The reformers’ emphasis on motherhood affirmed some women’s roles and life experiences but this made their exclusion of Black women even more harmful. Since “women have been defined in terms of motherhood, devaluing this aspect of a woman’s identity is especially devastating” because it “cuts to the heart of what it means to be valued as a woman.”³⁰ The ways in which

²⁵ Mink, *The Wages of Motherhood*, 39-43.

²⁶ Mink, *The Wages of Motherhood*, 51.

²⁷ Dorothy Roberts, *Killing the Black Body: Race, Reproduction, and the Meaning of Liberty* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1997), 205.

²⁸ Mink, *The Wages of Motherhood*, 51.

²⁹ Roberts, *Killing the Black Body*, 204.

³⁰ Roberts, 10.

these pensions re-entrenched gender roles and stratified women by race, class, and marital status foreshadowed problems with future relief programs which would displace mothers' pensions.

The New Deal

Before the Great Depression, charities and local governments administered economic relief programs. The New Deal marked the federalization and expansion of economic assistance, offering relief to those whom President Hoover neglected. The Public Works Administration, the Works Progress Administration, the Civilian Conservation Corps, and the Tennessee Valley Authority provided jobs for those suffering from unemployment while the Federal Emergency Relief Administration offered a combination of direct relief and work.³¹ Jobs included construction and other manual labor, producing consumer goods through sewing and mending garments, work in public institutions, arts projects, and clerical work.³² The New Deal also included the Social Security Act. This legislation offered direct assistance through old-age insurance, unemployment compensation, and categorical assistance for those who did not qualify for social security.

Roosevelt's initial goal for the New Deal was to provide cradle to grave security for all Americans. This would have included national health insurance and a public employment guarantee for anyone who exhausted their unemployment compensation.³³ Opponents, however, including interest groups such as the American Medical Association and conservatives within the

³¹ Nancy Rose, "The Great Depression and the Beginnings of the New Deal," in *Put to Work: The WPA and Public Employment in the Great Depression* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2009), 1-23.

³² Nancy Rose, "Federal Unemployment Relief," in *Put to Work: The WPA and Public Employment in the Great Depression*, 25-35.

³³ Rose, 73-89.

New Deal Administration, opposed these attempts. In contrast with Roosevelt's initial hopes, the final version of the Social Security Act was conservative.³⁴ Although Roosevelt wanted to implement a permanent jobs program, his financial advisers opposed a public employment option and instead favored temporary programs that would respond only to the crisis of the Depression. Their opposition was largely due to the criticisms of work programs, which included complaints that work programs were too expensive, high-relief wage rates were leading to labor shortages, the work was done inefficiently, and programs encouraged corruption and interfered with the private sector's ability to make a profit.

The business community specifically targeted production-for-use versus production-for-profit projects. Production-for-use goods were "consumer goods that were distributed to others on relief or used in other work projects or in public institutions," including, "subsistence gardens, projects to can and preserve produce, and fuel procurement," as well as "mended garments" and bedding which women sewed by hand or with machines.³⁵ These racially segregated programs provided the main type of work relief for blue-collar women who were excluded from other jobs.³⁶ These projects "raised a critical question: since production-for-profit was not a sufficient motive to induce business to produce needed goods and the government was producing them instead, why depend on the private sector at all?"³⁷ Due to these and other business sector fears, the scope of the work programs was narrowed.³⁸ "Other

³⁴ Rose, 73-74.

³⁵ Rose, 31.

³⁶ Rose, 31.

³⁷ Rose, 64.

³⁸ Rose, 62-65.

aspects of the Social Security Act also contributed to its conservative nature,” namely the gender and racial discrimination which were “embedded” in its programs.³⁹

Racism, classism, and sexism plagued New Deal programs and policies. Job assignments and wages within jobs programs were based on gender and race, with White men’s need for employment prioritized due to officials’ concerns with preserving White male authority within households. White women and Black people were paid less, restricted to a disproportionately small portion of the employment rolls, and forced out of certain jobs. Blacks were paid less because it was thought that people of color were accustomed to lower wages and they were classified as unskilled laborers regardless of their qualifications. They had to accept the lower pay or be denied work placements entirely. If they accepted these placements, they were dismissed from public employment when their labor was needed in agriculture or domestic service. The Social Security Act similarly reinforced stratification along lines of race, gender, and economic status. It largely provided assistance to White men, since it excluded those who worked in agriculture, domestic service, the government, and nonprofit organizations, and it did not provide insurance for the wives of men working in agriculture or trades.⁴⁰

Those who could not receive Social Security benefits could receive categorical assistance, but it was demeaning and stigmatizing. Categorical assistance, namely Aid to Dependent Children (ADC, later called AFDC) was poorly funded, run primarily by individual states, and its recipients were subjected to intensive regulation and scrutiny.⁴¹ Whereas social

³⁹ Rose, 74.

⁴⁰ Joanne L. Goodwin, “‘Employable Mothers’ and ‘Suitable Work’: A Re-Evaluation of Welfare and Wage-Earning for Women in the Twentieth-Century United States,” *Journal of Social History* 29, no. 2 (1995): 253-274.

⁴¹ Nancy Rose, “The Social Security Act and the WPA: The Response to the Conservative Attack,” in *Put to Work: The WPA and Public Employment in the Great Depression*, 73-89.

security laws required the federal government to pay recipients a fixed amount, ADC clients had to deal with caseworkers, supervisors, and administrators who all had discretion regarding who received aid and how much they received. These bureaucrats often required recipients to meet means standards and to pass suitable home tests that probed clients' sexual behavior. Many states used such standards to exclude deliberately agricultural workers and domestic servants so they could maintain a workforce of Black menial laborers in the South. Black mothers also received smaller stipends because they purportedly needed less to live on than Whites. Additionally, because the ADC provided aid exclusively to the child, it defeated the idea previously implicit in mothers' pensions that the government should compensate women's reproductive service to society.⁴² Thus, social insurance provided a dignified entitlement to White men and their wives, while categorical assistance such as the ADC doled out only humiliating relief which reinforced divisions among women and the notion that their contributions to society were lesser than men's.

The Civil Rights Era

After Black Southerners moved North and became a powerful voting block, the Democratic Party had to grapple with how to woo Black voters without alienating White Southerners. To avoid this issue, President Kennedy focused on antipoverty policy instead of racial struggles, but his antipoverty program "had barely begun when he was assassinated."⁴³ When President Johnson took office, he "began steering the ship of state toward the familiar liberalism" of the New Deal, "but also toward an unknown destination as the federal government sought to end racial discrimination."⁴⁴

⁴² Roberts, 204-206.

⁴³ Jill S. Quadagno, *The Color of Welfare* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995) 28.

⁴⁴ Quadagno, *The Color of Welfare*, 29.

Under Johnson, Congress passed the Civil Rights Act and the Voting Rights Act in 1964 and 1965, respectively. However, legal enfranchisement did little for Black Americans who were “relegated to decrepit housing [...], forced to send their children to inferior schools, and locked out of opportunities for jobs with upward mobility.”⁴⁵ Civil rights activists demanded that the new administration confront the New Deal compromises which had “forsaken racial equality for a stable political coalition between the industrial working class and the South.”⁴⁶ Johnson attempted this through his War on Poverty. In 1964, Congress passed the Economic Opportunity Act and created the Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO) and corresponding Community Action Agencies that provided resources for local civil rights efforts. Unfortunately, following backlash to his efforts, Johnson retreated from these programs.⁴⁷

President Nixon abolished the OEO in 1973.⁴⁸ His administration attributed the nation’s ongoing problems with poverty to cultural failings. This notion was increasingly popular among conservative thinkers at this time who were convinced that poor people’s cultural environment fostered self-defeating attitudes and behaviors which perpetuated economic inequality.⁴⁹ Despite these racist ideas, which were commonplace among those in the Nixon Administration, Nixon’s proposed Family Assistance Plan (FAP) constituted a “revolutionary” attempt to replace

⁴⁵ Quadagno, 29.

⁴⁶ Quadagno, 29.

⁴⁷ Quadagno, 28-34.

⁴⁸ Quadagno, 57.

⁴⁹ Quadagno, 34-36.

AFDC.⁵⁰ Instead of penalizing work like AFDC had, a household receiving FAP benefits could earn up to \$720 annually while retaining their benefits. This bill would have helped many poor Americans. Why would a conservative president endorse this measure?⁵¹

Despite the help that FAP would offer many Americans, FAP was ultimately based on unjust ideas about race and gender. The administration favored FAP because, instead of directly helping Black Americans, it was designed to provide a minimum income for all of the working poor and to calm rebellions led by welfare and civil rights activists. Conservatives believed these patriarchal, White family norms were the prerequisite to social and familial stability. These beliefs motivated FAP's incentives for Black men to be breadwinners and for Black women to stay at home with their children.⁵² Democratic Senator and presidential advisor Daniel Patrick Moynihan's report that laid the groundwork for FAP argued that, although there was "plenty of evidence tying social unrest to high unemployment, the underlying cause" was the disintegration of the Black family, which led to increased welfare dependency.⁵³ Moynihan's report emphasized the need to establish male dominance in the Black family, specifically through reinstating Black men "as household heads by reducing the labor-force participation" of Black women.⁵⁴

⁵⁰ Quadagno, 117.

⁵¹ Quadagno, 118.

⁵² Quadagno, 118-124.

⁵³ Quadagno, 124.

⁵⁴ Quadagno, 124.

FAP simultaneously promised “to restore the traditional patriarchal family” and encouraged women recipients to work more.⁵⁵ Despite this encouragement, FAP “contained few programs to help poor women improve their job skills or find jobs and provided little support for child care.”⁵⁶ The expense of providing child care motivated the bill’s focus on providing employment opportunities for men, who were seen as more likely to succeed in the labor market. To “program bureaucrats, the working poor were male.”⁵⁷ Since welfare mothers were not the “working poor,” “FAP would have done nothing for them.”⁵⁸ These women opposed FAP because its benefits were too low and the work incentives too punitive. They wanted job training, employment opportunities, and childcare so that they could have the opportunities that middle-class White women enjoyed, and they wanted the right to work or the right to stay home with their children if the work did not pay enough.

Southern Democrats opposed FAP even more strongly. It would have given payment to two-thirds of the Black population in the South, especially benefitting rural Black families with many children since benefits increased with family size. Black women would have been able to receive FAP without working in the formal labor market, since women with preschool children, unemployed husbands, and those over 65 years old were exempt from work registration. These exceptions meant that eight out of nine domestics could have stopped working for Southern White families while earning full FAP payments. But White Southerners wanted to continue to

⁵⁵ Quadagno, 125.

⁵⁶ Quadagno, 125.

⁵⁷ Quadagno, 125-126.

⁵⁸ Quadagno, 127.

exploit the domestics' labor. Facing opposition from Southerners, welfare recipients, unions, and the Chamber of Commerce, FAP died.⁵⁹ Many of the New Deal welfare policies which privileged White men stayed in place, and the U.S. entered into a political era during which politicians would not even attempt to address racial, gender, and economic disparities.

Ending Welfare as We Know It

As costs to support social programs soared and welfare increasingly became defined as a “black” program, it came under renewed attack.⁶⁰ Following the Civil Rights Movement, Black Americans had more access to welfare benefits. This inclusiveness led to the increasing stigmatization of AFDC and its eventual demise. Women of color, “long held in opposition to Anglo American feminine and maternal ideals” had become “major beneficiaries of a program originally designed to reward” White women.⁶¹ When Bill Clinton ran for president in 1992, he promised to end welfare as we knew it. In 1996, President Clinton signed a welfare reform bill that ended AFDC. This legislation, the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) replaced AFDC and created a block grant called Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) to fund benefits to address poverty.⁶² PRWORA effectively ended welfare by ending the New Deal guarantee of economic assistance to poor caregivers and their children.⁶³ Like previous welfare policies, PRWORA reinforces women's

⁵⁹ Quadagno, 126-133.

⁶⁰ Gwendolyn Mink, *Welfare's End*, (New York: Cornell University Press, 1998) 47-52.

⁶¹ Mink, *Welfare's End*, 48.

⁶² Gene Falk, “The Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Block Grant: A Legislative History,” Congressional Research Service, November 29, 2017.

⁶³ Mink, *Welfare's End*, 61.

oppression on the basis of race, gender, and class. It prevents mothers from staying at home with their children, violates recipients' privacy rights, targets women of color, and encourages White, heterosexual, middle-class domesticity.

To receive the federal block grant TANF established, states are required to mandate work participation rates.⁶⁴ This is based on the idea that welfare undermines individual responsibility and recipients' work ethic.⁶⁵ Ending welfare, however, means ending poor, unmarried mothers' ability to caregive.⁶⁶ Unmarried women specifically are disadvantaged because PRWORA requires just one parent to engage in work activities. This makes interfamilial child care nearly impossible for unmarried women whom it forces to leave their homes to work. PRWORA fails to accommodate the needs of these women. This makes wage-earning and caregiving incompatible for many women, ensuring that successfully combining these aspects of life remains a privilege for women who are married or can afford to hire caregivers. Meanwhile, PRWORA forces married mothers into dependence on male wages and pressures them to sacrifice wage-earning because formal employment structures do not accommodate family needs.⁶⁷

Work requirements also treat mothers as providers of goods, services, and care for any other children and families besides their own.⁶⁸ Policies that force women to accept even low-paying and menial work send the message that, if a caregiver is unmarried, her labor is more valuable anywhere other than her own home and with her own children. Women of color

⁶⁴ Mink, *Welfare's End*, 69-102.

⁶⁵ Mink, *Welfare's End*, 130.

⁶⁶ Mink, *Welfare's End*, 130.

⁶⁷ Mink, *Welfare's End*, 109-120.

⁶⁸ Mink, *Welfare's End*, 130.

disproportionately fulfill these caregiving roles and do so in White families. This perpetuates the devaluation of Black women's intimate lives and domestic responsibilities. These requirements therefore harm White and Black women in different ways, and they harm poor women regardless of race. They reveal U.S. society's disregard for the importance of caregiving labor and our readiness to force poor women into inadequate jobs even if it means that they and their families are worse off.

Welfare recipients have also been forced to sacrifice their privacy rights.⁶⁹ Going back to mothers' pensions, relief for single mothers has involved bureaucratic supervision of recipients to determine their eligibility based on means tests and their morality. These bureaucrats search their clients' homes and judge their sexual and romantic lives. The more recent requirement that women help the state establish their children's paternity exemplifies this. Because states want men to take responsibility for "their" women, they require single women to "cooperate in establishing the paternity of her child and in obtaining child support payments."⁷⁰ This forces women to reveal their sexual histories and makes them more vulnerable to potentially abusive men they may not want in their or their child's life. It also results in punishment for men who fail to pay support, even if they are absent or impoverished.⁷¹ Meanwhile middle-class families receive public subsidies through social security and tax breaks without a similar impact on their privacy rights.⁷²

⁶⁹ Mink, *Welfare's End*, 70.

⁷⁰ Mink, *Welfare's End*, 60.

⁷¹ Mink, *Welfare's End*, 74.

⁷² Roberts, 226-227.

Welfare reform has subjected Black women in particular to rights violations. Discourse around welfare directly stigmatizes Black women by associating them with “the welfare queen.” In contrast with “the welfare mother who draws upon the moral capital attached to American motherhood, the welfare queen constitutes a highly materialistic, domineering, and manless working-class Black woman” who relies on the “public dole[.]”⁷³ This stereotype harms Black women and marks their children as a potential menace to society—as “criminals, crackheads, and welfare cheats waiting to happen”—before they are even born.⁷⁴ Their mothers are blamed for birthing this generation of future dependents, as though Black people, rather than an unjust social order, cause inequality.⁷⁵

Those who aim to control Black women’s reproduction have used welfare reform to restrict Black female fertility by controlling the number of children born to women receiving public assistance. Attempts to limit the number of children they have include incentives for poor women to use long-acting contraceptives and family caps.⁷⁶ To incentivize the former, legislators have made Norplant and other options available through Medicaid and offered cash bonuses to women on welfare who use it. To enforce the latter, states have denied additional payments for children born to women already receiving benefits through AFDC. Political actors do not mention race when discussing these policy options, but race still informs welfare debates. Even though most families who benefited from AFDC were not Black, Black women have

⁷³ Collins, *Black Feminist Thought*, 88.

⁷⁴ Roberts, 21.

⁷⁵ Roberts, 21.

⁷⁶ Roberts, 209-215.

disproportionately relied on this form of government aid, and the American public associates them with welfare. Contemporary welfare policies “share features of eugenic thinking” which emphasize the importance of “reducing the cost of subsidizing the unfit.”⁷⁷ Current family caps are not based on “notions of recipients’ genetic inferiority” but “are seen as a way of ridding America of the burden poor people” impose, especially those of color.⁷⁸

PRWORA makes women of all races more vulnerable to men and privileges those who conform to standards of White, wealthy, heterosexual domesticity. The bill specifically states that “marriage is the foundation of a successful society.”⁷⁹ To support this, legislators cited statistics on teenage and nonmarital childrearing— anxieties about which have long been linked to Whites’ fears about communities of color having more children. The bill also aims to promote “job preparation, work, and marriage” and to “encourage the formation and maintenance of two-parent families.”⁸⁰ The bill later states that a “mutually faithful monogamous relationship in the context of marriage is the expected standard of human sexual activity” and that “bearing children out-of-wedlock is likely to have harmful consequences for the child, child’s parents, and society.”⁸¹ Congress and the Clinton Administration voiced support for a very specific type of family—one that aligned with standards of heterosexual and monogamous marriage, middle-class work patterns, and whiteness. Due to this bias, welfare reform favored married

⁷⁷ Roberts, 215.

⁷⁸ Roberts, 216-217.

⁷⁹ U.S. Congress, 104th Congress. *H.R. 3734, Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act*. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1996, page 6.

⁸⁰ *Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act*, 9.

⁸¹ *Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act*, 250.

women who did not necessarily have to work outside the home even if their families needed welfare because only one parent had to work. These incentives reward women who want to care for their children and decide to marry and thus become dependent on a man.⁸² Welfare rights organizer Johnnie Tillman described AFDC as forcing women to trade “a man” for “the man”; as we can see, the reverse is also true.⁸³

Conclusion

Racism, sexism, and classism embedded in welfare policies reinforce women’s subordination. To implement welfare policies that do not stigmatize, degrade, or generally mistreat recipients we will need to consider how race, gender, and class interact to make economically disadvantaged populations vulnerable to public policy decisions that neglect their needs. This requires that we be mindful of why and how we implement certain policies. Mothers’ pensions were designed to benefit White women at the expense of non-White women, New Deal programs and FAP aimed to benefit White men and reinforce traditional family structures, and PRWORA reformed policies in response to their increasing stigmatization once they had finally become more inclusive of those women most in need of assistance. Going forward, we need to implement public policies that do not neglect already vulnerable groups and actively reject the biases and exclusiveness that characterized these policy choices.

Pursuing Social Justice: Undermining the Faces of Oppression

We need a framework to evaluate UBI and a FJG that accounts for vulnerable groups’ needs and rejects their oppression. The existing frameworks which most authors use to evaluate UBI and FJG prioritize the need to combat poverty, expand freedom, or ensure equality among

⁸² Mink, *Welfare’s End*, 106-107.

⁸³ Mink, *Welfare’s End*, 78.

democratic citizens. The framework that focuses on equality among democratic citizens is most relevant to this paper. This is not because combating poverty and securing freedom are unimportant for women, but because social movements historically have relied on the rhetoric of equal rights associated with citizenship to democratize America. For example, feminist issues such as suffrage and abortion are generally discussed in terms of women's lack of equal rights within a nation that claims to be a democracy under which all citizens are equal. Due to our particular concern with women as a group being subject to inequality on the grounds of race, class, and gender, among other factors, it makes sense to use a democratic citizenship framework to analyze UBI and FJG. Instead, however, I argue that democratic citizenship does not offer an ideal framework with which to evaluate public policy. U.S. history shows that this model does not offer a secure or inclusive basis to evaluate policies and therefore is incapable of guaranteeing democratic citizenship rights for all.

Historically, the category of citizen in which a person was placed, or their exclusion from this category altogether, depended on one's race, gender, and class. In *Civic Ideals: Conflicting Visions of Citizenship in U.S. History*, Rogers Smith points out that American lawmakers have “unapologetically structured U.S. citizenship in terms” of “racial, ethnic, and gendered hierarchies,” and restricted citizenship based on “passionate beliefs that America was [...] a white nation, a Protestant nation, a nation in which true americans were native-born men with Anglo-Saxon ancestors.”⁸⁴ So many Americans throughout our history have lacked equal political rights that courts and executive officials have been rendered incapable of clearly deciding who was a citizen. They have divided Americans into categories that include birthright

⁸⁴ Rogers M. Smith, *Civic Ideals: Conflicting Visions of Citizenship in U.S. History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 3.

citizens, naturalized citizens, non-voting citizens, jurisdictional citizens, commercial citizens, citizens subject to incarceration or deportation without due process, U.S. nationals, and colonial subjects. These distinctions have made American citizenship “an intellectually puzzling, legally confused, and politically charged and contested status.”⁸⁵

For most of this history, American laws determined most people in the world ineligible to become U.S. citizens due to their race, nationality, or gender. For at least two-thirds of our history, most of our domestic adult population was ineligible for citizenship based on these categories.⁸⁶ This demonstrates that the sought-after status of “citizen” has been interwoven with broader structures including white supremacy, gendered oppression, xenophobia, and imperialism. This fraught history has motivated many social groups to make citizenship and its associated rights more inclusive so that all Americans can be afforded these protections. Various groups, such as abolitionists and suffragists, have made significant progress. However, these eras of democratization have preceded devastating setbacks for women and racial minorities.

Black Americans’ ongoing struggle to achieve equality illustrates the injustices that problematize American citizenship. Even when the U.S. went through “great eras” of democratization—the Revolution, the Civil War and Reconstruction, and the Civil Rights Era—this progress has not lasted. For instance, in 1857, the Supreme Court ruled that no Black Americans were legally citizens.⁸⁷ Many Blacks regained citizenship and voting rights when the Reconstruction Amendments were ratified, but lost these associated rights again by 1905 and did

⁸⁵ Smith, *Civic Ideals*, 14.

⁸⁶ Smith, 15.

⁸⁷ Gossie Harold Hudson, “Black Americans vs. Citizenship: The Dred Scott Decision,” *Negro History Bulletin* 46, no. 1 (1983): 26-28.

not regain them until after the Civil Rights Movement.⁸⁸ Black women's exclusion from mothers' pensions and other welfare policies due to the perception that they were not true citizens provides an especially relevant example of how gaining formal citizenship did not secure rights for Black Americans. The precarious nature of Black Americans' citizenship does not minimize the significance of the change they have effected. Still, Black Americans remain unequal to White Americans in many ways, and these inequalities continue to undermine America's claim to be a democracy. Black Americans' experiences show that citizenship and its protections are not universal, guaranteed, or consistent. One's status as a citizen and resulting rights depend largely on gender, race, nationality, and the ever-changing political context.

Social justice offers a compelling alternative to the citizenship rights model as a way to evaluate potential policies. In a sense, the term is more vague than the category of democratic rights which Americans associate with, among other things, a Constitution that clearly outlines the protections to which citizens are entitled. But this is part of what weakens democratic rights as an evaluative model. Its meaning has been constantly debated and delineated throughout American history, and has always applied unevenly to different groups. Ambiguity can function as a strength of a social justice model. Successful theories and concepts "thrive on ambiguity and incompleteness" because, rather than settling "matters once and for all[,]" they "open them up for further discussion and inquiry."⁸⁹

In *Justice and the Politics of Difference*, Iris Marion Young provides a way for us to conceive of social justice and its opposite, oppression. She rejects as problematic theories of

⁸⁸ Smith, 16.

⁸⁹ Kathy Davis, "Intersectionality as buzzword: A sociology of science perspective on what makes a feminist theory successful," *SAGE Journals* 9, no. 1 (2008): 76-77.

justice that stand “independent of a given social context” and instead favors an approach to justice based on listening.⁹⁰ She repeats Jean-Francois Lyotard’s assertion that there exist “language games in which the important thing is to listen” and one such “game is the game of the just” in which “one speaks only inasmuch as one listens, that is, one speaks as a listener, and not as an author.”⁹¹ Through listening, Young articulates “claims about justice and injustice implicit in the politics” of “the new left social movements of the 1960s and 1970s[.]”⁹² These include “democratic socialist, environmentalist, Black, Chicano, Puerto Rican, and American Indian movements; movements against U.S. military intervention in the Third World; gay and lesbian liberation; movements of the disabled, the old, tenants, and the poor; and the feminist movement.”⁹³ All these movements claim that “American society contains deep institutional injustices” but “find little kinship with contemporary philosophical theories of justice.”⁹⁴ Young aims to “express rigorously and reflectively some of the claims about justice and injustice implicit in the politics of these movements, and to explore their meanings and implications.”⁹⁵

Young argues for an enabling conception of justice that refers “to the institutional conditions necessary for the development and exercise of individual capacities and collective communication and cooperation.”⁹⁶ Two constraints, oppression and domination, prevent the

⁹⁰ Iris Marion Young, *Justice and the Politics of Difference* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1990), 4.

⁹¹ Young, *Justice and the Politics of Difference*, 4.

⁹² Young, 7.

⁹³ Young, 7.

⁹⁴ Young, 7.

⁹⁵ Young, 7.

⁹⁶ Young, 39.

development and exercise of these individual and collective capacities. Young defines domination as “the institutional constraint on self-determination” and oppression as “the institutional constraint on self-development[.]”⁹⁷ Our conception of justice must address both oppression and domination.⁹⁸ New social movements that developed in the U.S. in the 1960s used the term “oppression” to describe the “systemic constraints” disadvantaged groups suffer “that are not necessarily the result of the intentions of a tyrant” despite the tendency in Western political discourse to equate oppression with state tyranny.⁹⁹ Instead, the oppression these groups suffer is structural, “embedded in unquestioned norms, habits, and symbols, in the assumptions underlying institutional rules and the collective consequences of following those rules.”¹⁰⁰ Young emphasizes that, while material deprivation or maldistribution are important aspects of the social conditions of oppression, these conditions involve issues beyond distribution.¹⁰¹

Oppression is a structural phenomenon that social groups face. A social group is “a collective of persons differentiated from at least one other group by cultural forms, practices, or way of life.”¹⁰² They can exist between societies, such as the case with Native and Settler Americans, or they can exist within a society.¹⁰³ Group “differentiation is not in itself oppressive,” and not all social groups are oppressed. Oppression is due to “a conceptualization of

⁹⁷ Young, 37-39.

⁹⁸ Young, 37.

⁹⁹ Young, 41.

¹⁰⁰ Young, 41.

¹⁰¹ Young, 38.

¹⁰² Young, 43.

¹⁰³ Young, 43.

group difference in terms of unalterable essential natures that determine what group members deserve or are capable of, and that exclude groups so entirely from one another that they have no similarities or overlapping attributes.”¹⁰⁴ Group differentiation is relational, fluid, and group differences cut across other groups because individuals have more than one group identity.¹⁰⁵

The general commonality among social groups is that they all “suffer some inhibition of their ability to develop and exercise their capacities and express their needs, thoughts, and feelings.”¹⁰⁶ Beyond that, there is no single set of criteria that describes their experiences. They “are not oppressed to the same extent or in the same ways.”¹⁰⁷ Rather than agreeing on one essential cause of their oppression, social groups seem instead to refer to “a family of concepts and conditions” which Young divides into five categories: exploitation, marginalization, powerlessness, cultural imperialism, and violence.¹⁰⁸ “Whether a group is oppressed depends on whether it is subject to one or more” of these five faces of oppression.¹⁰⁹

Social justice “requires not the melting away of differences” among social groups “but institutions that promote reproduction of and respect for group differences without oppression.”¹¹⁰ Building just institutions will require a great deal of societal change. Public policies may aid this progress, or—as with previous welfare policies—help perpetuate obstacles

¹⁰⁴ Young, 47.

¹⁰⁵ Young, 47-48.

¹⁰⁶ Young, 40.

¹⁰⁷ Young, 40.

¹⁰⁸ Young, 40.

¹⁰⁹ Young, 47.

¹¹⁰ Young, 47.

which hamper it. The rest of this section will analyze whether and how effectively UBI and FJG would undermine each face of oppression that affects American women. I argue that UBI or FJG either do a poor, fair, or good job of undermining the form of oppression. A “poor” job means that the policy would exacerbate the root cause of that form of oppression. A “fair” job means that a version of the policy would leave its root causes intact. A “good” job means that the policy addresses the source of the oppression and therefore likely ameliorates its consequences as well. Ultimately, a theoretical analysis of potential policies should examine the logic that underpins each policy and consider how its reinforcement or deconstruction would affect the policies’ success following implementation. This evaluation is not based on one particular version of UBI or FJG, since it is currently impossible to predict what form of UBI or FJG would end up being implemented. Nonetheless, it can guide those who will make decisions about the type of policies that may be proposed.

Exploitation

Young’s articulation of exploitation relies on the Marxist theory of exploitation. Under this theory, class domination in capitalist society exists because “some people exercise their capacities under the control, according to the purposes, and for the benefit of other people.”¹¹¹ This process generally occurs in the context of unpaid or paid labor, because profit “comes from the difference between the value of the labor performed and the value of the capacity to labor which the capitalist purchases.”¹¹² Thus, profit is only possible because the capitalist “extracts

¹¹¹ Young, 49.

¹¹² Young, 49.

benefits from workers.”¹¹³ This is oppressive because it entails distributive inequality and “enacts a structural relation between social groups” that involves power and inequality.¹¹⁴

Exploitation does not only involve class differences. Feminists have shown that “women’s oppression consists partly in a systematic and unreciprocated transfer of powers from women to men” that makes possible men’s “freedom, power, status, and self-realization.”¹¹⁵ This transfer occurs primarily within marriages where women perform disproportionate amounts of emotional and domestic labor and in workplaces where women are wage workers. Race exacerbates these problems, as women of color are exploited due to their racial and gender identities.¹¹⁶ Black women may face exploitation in the home, exploitation when they work in other communities’ businesses and homes, and exploitation through their performance of menial labor for the general benefit of White-dominated society. Because this aspect of oppression entails more than distributive injustice, redistribution of material goods cannot undo it. Justice will require the “reorganization of institutions and practices of decisionmaking, alteration of the division of labor, and similar measures of institutional, structural, and cultural change.”¹¹⁷

This understanding of exploitation directly challenges the American work ethic, which tells us that subjecting oneself to exploitation is a necessary part of being a dignified and productive member of society. Many scholars have traced America’s work ethic to the Poor Laws of Elizabethan England. These laws were based on categorical distinctions which divided

¹¹³ Young, 49.

¹¹⁴ Young, 49-50.

¹¹⁵ Young, 50.

¹¹⁶ Young, 51.

¹¹⁷ Young, 53.

people based on whether they were the “deserving poor,” such as the elderly, children, or the infirm, or the “undeserving poor.” The former received relief in the form of cash or food, while the latter faced punishment including whipping, jail, and even execution.¹¹⁸ This differentiation between the deserving and undeserving poor spread to America “where it married with our country’s deep sense of individualism and our cult of self reliance.”¹¹⁹ The result is a national culture in which we blame poverty on individual failures because the work ethic obscures structural obstacles. America’s work ethic thus rationalizes exploitation and legitimizes inequality,¹²⁰ particularly on the basis of race and gender. The exclusion of some from the dignity of the work ethic makes it more attractive to others because this racialization and gendering of work provides an avenue through which Whites assert moral superiority and legitimate their economic privilege over others.¹²¹

The financial security that basic income ensures would provide women with an exit option in case they need to leave an exploitative workplace or home environment. However, the Marxist interpretation of exploitation necessarily implies that nearly all workplaces and domestic relationships will be exploitative for women, unless we fundamentally restructure these arenas. Still, UBI may improve the bargaining positions of those women who perform caregiving labor in the home and thus help them encourage men to share their domestic work.¹²² For this option to

¹¹⁸ Weeks, 53.

¹¹⁹ Anne Lowrey, *Give People Money: How a Universal Basic Income Would End Poverty, Revolutionize Work, and Remake the World* (New York: Crown, 2018), 118.

¹²⁰ Weeks, 53.

¹²¹ Weeks, 62-64.

¹²² Ailsa McKay, “Why a citizens’ basic income? A question of gender equality or gender bias,” *Work, Employment & Society* 21, no. 2 (2007): 327-348.

prove fruitful for women, it is crucial that UBI is given to individuals, and not households. Household-based schemes disregard the sexual division of labor, the fact that women earn less than men, and potentially unequal income distribution.¹²³

Receiving UBI can also facilitate women's refusal to work, whether they refuse to work in paid employment or to perform unwaged domestic labor.¹²⁴ This refusal would help women escape exploitative situations and allow them to reject the American work ethic which erases their domestic labor. Since women's labor is privatized and thus goes unrecognized as labor, women who serve as primary caregivers at home are not perceived to be engaging with the work ethic and its moral prescriptions. Refusing to perform paid labor, or demanding to do less of it as a means of reducing one's exploitation, would allow women to reject the toxic association of morality with work which stigmatizes and erases their labor.¹²⁵

Refusing to work is crucial to making employment exploitation seem unnatural and thereby challenging the institution of employment as it exists in the U.S. Undermining the notion that transferring one's energies and capabilities to another is a necessary part of life may help many Americans, regardless of their gender or whether they participate in formal employment. It would help women in particular because they are not just exploited in the workplace, but also in their homes. Although UBI does provide an exit option for women in an exploitative home situation, few women are likely to distance themselves from their romantic partners and/or children to avoid this exploitation. If finances were the only issue, many women who have the means to do so may have already left their families due to the exploitative nature of women's

¹²³ Pateman, "Democratizing Citizenship: Some Advantages of a Basic Income," 100.

¹²⁴ Weeks, 125.

¹²⁵ Weeks, 125.

traditional role as caretakers of their homes and its inhabitants. Because of this one might ask what is the point of UBI if it merely facilitates women's choice to suffer exploitation in the home rather than in a workplace?

But UBI's potential to alleviate exploitation becomes clear when we consider the importance of recognizing women's labor so that we can see how, even when unpaid, the work women perform in the home is as exploitative as paid labor. This understanding of domestic labor does not imply that women have exclusively worked in their own homes until recently. Black women have long been exploited outside the home as slaves and laborers. However, while White women's domestic caregiving labor has been romanticized, women of color have been forced to perform domestic labor for others while their caregiving responsibilities for their own families go unrecognized. Thus, although the treatment of labor depends largely on race, we can still see how all women's labor is devalued and thus rendered invisible, which in turn makes the exploitation they experience invisible as well.

Implementing UBI as a way to recognize women's labor will not prevent women from being exploited. The "structural relations" of power and inequality enacted "between social groups" which define exploitation would remain intact,¹²⁶ since women are unlikely to withdraw completely from arenas of labor. But it remains important to recognize women's labor, even if doing so does not immediately lessen their exploitation. Since, unlike men, women experience exploitation not just at work but at home, recognition is a crucial step in acknowledging the ways that women's unpaid labor is exploited in the domestic sphere just as formally employed workers' labor is exploited. Drawing attention to exploitation is critical to undermining it, but to

¹²⁶ Young, 49-50.

do this we must be able first to recognize that women perform exploitable labor in and out of their homes. UBI would provide this recognition and thus do a *fair* job at undermining women's exploitation.

Like UBI, implementing FJG would undermine women's oppression by providing them with the financial security necessary for escaping exploitative household environments. However, it is unclear that this option is accessible for many women. The caregiving work that many women are expected to perform at home could present substantial barriers that make it harder for women to use a full-time job as an exit option. As many scholars have noted when considering workplace inequality, direct and indirect financial penalties exist when women attempt to combine paid work with caregiving responsibilities.¹²⁷ A woman-friendly jobs guarantee would need to account for this fact and accommodate women's life patterns, not just men's, possibly by basing their workplace design on Nancy Fraser's description of a universal caregiver model. Instead of making women more like men, this model induces "men to become more like most women are now" by "dismantling the gendered opposition between breadwinning and caregiving" and encouraging men and women to embrace both paid, formal and unpaid, caregiving labor.¹²⁸ A jobs guarantee like this may undermine exploitation, but a guarantee that resembles New Deal work programs would not. The potential for FJG to undermine exploitation, then, largely depends on the type of jobs guarantee implemented.

Unlike UBI, FJG would not necessarily help those facing exploitation in the workplace. Instead, it risks establishing an alternative, state-run sphere where workers are exploited. The

¹²⁷ McKay, "Why a citizens' basic income?" 341.

¹²⁸ Nancy Fraser, "After the Family Wage: A Postindustrial Thought Experiment," in *Justice Interruptus: Critical Reflections on the "Postsocialist" Condition* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 60-62.

potential for FJG merely to duplicate an exploitative work environment depends upon the type of FJG implemented. If the jobs that workers perform does not produce a profit, then no capitalist is extracting “benefits from workers” and thus no structural relations “between social groups” that involve power and inequality are enacted.¹²⁹ However, it is possible that those who would most benefit from a jobs guarantee—former felons, young workers, poor women, and racial minorities—might replace the exploited workers and the broader White- and male-dominated society might replace the capitalists. Although the latter would not be receiving a profit from the former’s labor, it would receive benefits in forms such as community services and improved infrastructure. These benefits do not present an exact parallel to profit since they presumably would help everyone but they may still constitute a benefit extracted from workers which implies their exploitation.

Although a jobs guarantee which enables workers to give back to their communities may provide an escape from exploitation, the logic that underpins FJG may reinforce the work ethic which renders caregiving labor invisible. FJG “asserts that, if individuals bear a moral duty to work, then society and employers bear a reciprocal moral duty to provide good dignified work for all[.]”¹³⁰ But his assertion assumes that individuals bear a moral duty to work, and most versions of a jobs guarantee assumes this work should occur under within a traditional workplace environment. These assumptions normalize exploitation and ignore the enormous amount of labor that women perform within their homes. Unless the version of FJG implemented rejects these assumptions, the policy may mirror 1990s welfare reform which urged mothers to work

¹²⁹ Young, 49-50.

¹³⁰ Jeff Spross, “You’re Hired!” *Democracy: A Journal of Ideas*, <https://democracyjournal.org/magazine/44/youre-hired/>.

outside the home rather than enabling them to care for their families if they so choose. Although many feminists have spent their careers arguing against the assumption that women's primary role should be as caregivers, women should still retain the right to follow this life path without being exploited. Affirming women's right not to work in formal, paid employment that follows traditionally masculine life patterns is especially important considering the experiences of women of color, who have been prevented from caregiving for their families.

Offering women a job but not the option to stay home without suffering from exploitation would not help many women. A jobs guarantee which accounts for women's needs, however, may avoid these pitfalls. Still, FJG risks reinforcing the work ethic which legitimizes exploitation and has rendered women's caregiving labor invisible. This reinforcement would perpetuate the stigmatization of women, erase their contributions, and thereby make it difficult to point out the exploitation they face. Therefore, FJG risks reinforcing the causes of women's exploitation and would do a *poor* job at undermining it .

Marginalization

Marginalization may be the "most dangerous form of oppression" because it involves the expulsion of an entire "category of people" from "useful participation in social life" and thus subjects them "to severe material deprivation and even extermination."¹³¹ "Marginals," or "people the system of labor cannot or will not use," suffer from marginalization.¹³² They are often "racially marked," but other groups of marginals exist including the old, the unemployed, single mothers and their children, and people with disabilities.¹³³ Marginals are oppressed

¹³¹ Young, 53.

¹³² Young, 53.

¹³³ Young, 53.

because they are dependent in a society that favors independence. Those who deviate from the standard of the paradigmatic independent citizen and require assistance from institutions “are subject to patronizing, punitive, demeaning, and arbitrary treatment by the policies and people associated with welfare bureaucracies.”¹³⁴

Two categories of injustice accompany marginality. First, “the provision of welfare itself produces new injustices by depriving those dependent on it of rights and freedom that others have.” Second, even when “mitigated by the welfare state” marginalization “blocks the opportunity to exercise capacities in socially defined and recognized ways.”¹³⁵ The redistribution of material goods alone cannot remedy these injustices. Even if we attempted to do so and to provide institutions that respected marginals, “injustices of marginality would remain in the form of uselessness, boredom, and lack of self-respect.”¹³⁶ To help marginals, UBI and FJG must help alleviate both these injustices.

UBI would help lessen the first injustice associated with marginalization, but its ability to do the same for the second is less clear. A truly universal version of a basic income would mean that marginals who may depend entirely on a state-provided basic income would be subjected to the same (preferably nonexistent) standards as all other recipients. This prevents the state-sponsored deprivation of marginals’ rights and freedoms. However, UBI would not provide opportunities for marginals to exercise their capacities in socially defined and recognized ways, or alleviate their sense of “uselessness, boredom, and lack of self-respect.”¹³⁷ Young points out

¹³⁴ Young, 54.

¹³⁵ Young, 54.

¹³⁶ Young, 55.

¹³⁷ Young, 55.

that, since “marginalization is increasing, with no sign of abatement, some social policy analysts have introduced the idea of a ‘social wage’ as a guaranteed socially provided income not tied to the wage system” which “implies organizing some socially productive activity outside of the wage system, through public works or self-employed collectives.”¹³⁸

Here, Young points to a jobs guarantee. However, I disagree with her suggestion that a social wage necessarily implies public works or self-employed collectives. Instead, the best chance for UBI to alleviate the injustices of marginalization lies in its potential to shift what Americans consider to be worthwhile activities and to challenge the idea that dependence cannot be respectable. Our relationship with work is a primary reason that paid employment, among other activities, is thought to provide the primary route to usefulness and self respect. Although UBI does not provide marginals with a socially defined and recognized occupation, it might challenge the currently exclusive basis on which society decides which activities deserve recognition. The universal nature of UBI draws attention to how all people, regardless of the their activities, contribute and deserve recognition.

Marginals can be any gender, but the recognition of individuals’ inherent worth outside of what they produce or whether they participate in the formal labor market has distinctly gendered benefits. Society recognizes White women’s role as mothers, albeit without awarding it the same respect that we afford traditionally masculine activities, but women of color consistently face the devaluation of their nontraditional labor. They are also more likely to be marginals because of the feminization and racialization of poverty. Regardless of the overall gender makeup of those who we may categorize as “marginal,” marginalization is a feminist

¹³⁸ Young, 55.

issue. Women's well-being requires that we challenge the American work ethic and expand the range of activities which receive social recognition, since our current narrow-mindedness marginalizes some and privileges others. UBI's ability to further these goals shows that it would do a *good* job of undermining marginalization as a face of oppression.

According to Young, FJG seems like an ideal policy to combat both kinds of injustices associated with marginalization. Since marginals are people the system of labor cannot or will not use, it seems ideal to develop a program that includes them in our system of labor. Provided that the type of jobs guarantee implemented would not degrade its participants, it would offer state-sanctioned, socially-recognized support to marginals without subjecting them to the stigmatizing aspects of our previous welfare policies. Since marginals-turned-workers would work for this assistance, they may not face the stigma of dependence.

There are three problems with this potential interpretation. First, many marginals simply cannot or should not be included in our system of labor. People with disabilities and the elderly should not be forced to perform labor as a way to combat their own marginalization. Health concerns, among other potential complications, will prevent many marginals from participating in the labor force. Second, a jobs guarantee, unlike UBI, would specifically benefit vulnerable populations and therefore the American public is likely to associate it with these groups and further stigmatize them. A jobs guarantee which primarily helps employ people such as previously-convicted felons, people of color, people with disabilities, and single mothers is likely to become unpopular. Although these people would be working for the money they receive from the government, it is easy to imagine a jobs guarantee being attacked as another form of government welfare that fosters dependence. Third, even if a jobs guarantee remained highly

popular and was seen as a way to help poor Americans without facilitating their dependence, this very notion reinforces dependence itself as a degrading condition that must be avoided at all costs.

Dependency is an inescapable aspect of every person's life, as we all experience "immaturity of infancy and early childhood, illness and disability [...], and the fragility of advanced old age" and sometimes depend on others.¹³⁹ Although "cultural dimensions" and "physiological constraints determine what counts as" young, ill, and disabled, dependency remains for us "as unavoidable as birth and death are for all living organisms."¹⁴⁰ Caring for dependents is "a mark of our humanity."¹⁴¹ Nonetheless, those who we perceive as dependent face harmful stigma due to their need for assistance.

There are two primary reasons why those who depend on state assistance face stigma. First, many assume that dependence is both avoidable and the consequence of low moral character. Second, we consider certain types of state subsidies to be earned and therefore recipients are entitled to receive them, as opposed to supposedly unearned subsidies which we treat as concessions to irresponsible dependents. In reality, all Americans receive subsidies, whether in the form of welfare or via direct grants, favorable treatment, or reaping the benefits of another's labor.¹⁴² Policy experts across the American political system generally agree that dependence on welfare, but not other forms of dependence, "is bad for people, that it

¹³⁹ Eva Feder Kittay, *Love's Labor: Essays on Women, Equality, and Dependency* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 29.

¹⁴⁰ Kittay, *Love's Labor*, 29.

¹⁴¹ Kittay, 29.

¹⁴² Martha Albertson Fineman, "Dependencies," in *Women and Welfare: Theory and Practice in the United States and Europe*, eds. Nancy J. Hirschmann and Ulrike Liebert (New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 2001), 23-37.

undermines their motivation to support themselves, and isolates and stigmatizes welfare recipients in a way that over a long period feeds into and accentuates the underclass mindset and condition.”¹⁴³

Dependence is a gendered and racialized term that “usually refers to the condition of poor women with children who maintain their families” without “a male breadwinner []or an adequate wage[.]”¹⁴⁴ These women have to rely on government assistance, namely AFDC. The expression “welfare dependency” specifically “evokes the image of ‘the welfare mother,’ often figured as a young, unmarried black woman (perhaps even teenager) of uncontrolled sexuality.”¹⁴⁵ While rhetoric about the dangers of dependency leaves White, working men relatively unharmed, “the black solo mother” has come to “epitomize welfare dependency.”¹⁴⁶ These divisions based on race, gender, and class have resulted in “the opposition between the independent personality and the dependent personality” which “maps onto a whole series of hierarchical oppositions and dichotomies”¹⁴⁷ which reflect and reinforce racial, sexual, and class stratification which harm women.

Given the inevitability of dependency and the ways in which its stigmatization have harmed women of color in particular, we should challenge the stigma of dependence rather than reinforce it. An FJG risks reinforcing America’s relationship with work which valorizes the

¹⁴³ Nancy Fraser and Linda Gordon, “A Genealogy of ‘Dependency’: Tracing a Keyword of the U.S. Welfare State,” in *Justice Interruptus: Critical Reflections on the “Postsocialist” Condition* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 122.

¹⁴⁴ Fraser and Gordon, “A Genealogy of ‘Dependency,’” 123.

¹⁴⁵ Fraser and Gordon, 123.

¹⁴⁶ Fraser and Gordon, 138.

¹⁴⁷ Fraser and Gordon, 144.

“independent” citizen at the expense of those considered “dependent” who are marginalized, regardless of the type of guarantee introduced. This problem, as well jobs guarantees’ likely inability to be accessible to many marginals, indicates that FJG would do a *poor* job of undermining marginalization.

Powerlessness

Professionals and nonprofessionals alike suffer from exploitation, but nonprofessionals are additionally subject to powerlessness.¹⁴⁸ They lack the privileges which professionals enjoy, including: 1) the progressive development of their capacities and avenues for recognition through practicing their profession, 2) workplace autonomy, and 3) a way of life called “respectability.”¹⁴⁹ As a result, they “lack the authority, status, and sense of self that professionals” have.¹⁵⁰ This oppression is especially pronounced when one considers racism and sexism, as White women and people of color must prove their respectability whereas White men are “treated with respect until their working-class status is revealed.”¹⁵¹

UBI offers an exit option and a certain amount of leverage in workplace negotiations for those experiencing powerlessness. However, UBI cannot provide them a way to develop their capacities or find avenues for recognition by practicing their profession. Nor can it provide workplace autonomy or a pathway for inclusion in the “respectable” way of life associated with professionalism. Unfortunately, distinctions between professionals and nonprofessionals which

¹⁴⁸ Young, 56.

¹⁴⁹ Young, 57.

¹⁵⁰ Young, 57.

¹⁵¹ Young, 58.

privilege the former over the latter will remain as long as workplaces are undemocratized.¹⁵² Unlike with marginalization, which UBI could undermine by challenging the underlying logic which forces some into marginality, UBI does not address the arena of life in which powerlessness affects workers. Although UBI could provide a form of economic security that allows workers to, for example, strike to demand workplace democratization, there is no reason to think that such a strike and radical restructuring of our labor system would follow from implementing it. Since UBI would simply leave powerlessness unaddressed but not worsen it, it would do a *fair* job at addressing this form of oppression.

FJG similarly provides few prospects for those suffering from powerlessness. Although the jobs offered through this program could be structured to empower workers, publicly employed workers would still fall on one side or the other of the professional divide. Despite serving as a potential exit option, implementing FJG would likely mimic the private labor force rather than catalyze restructuring workplaces that would address powerlessness. FJG would do a *fair* job at undermining powerlessness because it fails to address it but does not worsen it.

Though neither UBI nor FJG effectively address powerlessness, this form of oppression is important to consider because it reveals that neither policy can alleviate all forms of oppression. Instead, these policies provide important transitory changes that should be part of a much larger shift in how we approach social welfare, employment, and labor, among other justice-related concerns.

Cultural Imperialism

¹⁵² Carole Pateman, *Participation and Democratic Theory*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970.

Cultural imperialism describes oppressed groups' experiences of "how the dominant meanings of a society render the particular perspective of one's own group invisible at the same time as they stereotype one's group and mark it as the Other."¹⁵³ This involves universalizing and normalizing the dominant group's experiences and culture and subordinating the group that "becomes reconstructed" as deviant and inferior due to its difference.¹⁵⁴ This experience echoes W.E.B. Du Bois's term, "double consciousness," which arises when an oppressed subject is defined by both a dominant and a subordinate culture and chooses to reject the "devalued, objectified, stereotyped visions" associated with their group.¹⁵⁵

Young claims that this experience, unlike the other forms of oppression, does not deal with labor, but women's experiences with labor call this claim into question. Feminists have consistently pointed out the problems with how we conceive of labor and how we treat the labor that women perform. This paper has already reviewed many of their complaints, but connecting them to the experience of cultural imperialism is important for understanding the connection between women's experiences in and out of the workforce and their oppression.

Although cultural imperialism and double consciousness generally describe the experiences of racialized minorities, not women, cultural imperialism still applies to women's experiences. Work produces economic goods and services as well as social and political subjects. The work that we perform classes, racializes, and genders us. Work is organized by gender, and

¹⁵³ Young, 59.

¹⁵⁴ Young, 59.

¹⁵⁵ Young, 60.

gender is enforced, performed, and recreated in arenas of work, particularly due to the gender differentiation of labor. The same can be said for racialized minorities who perform menial labor.

Work also contributes to the ways in which society attaches value to different types of labor and thereby produces oppressive hierarchies based on race, gender, and class.¹⁵⁶ Racial minorities who disproportionately perform stigmatized labor and women who perform caregiving labor risk being seen as contributing less to society. Presumably, this is why these workers are paid less, or not at all. Women of color experience these consequences most acutely because they are simultaneously paid less for their waged work and face the devaluation of their unpaid domestic labor. Though cultural imperialism and labor may not be linked explicitly, our culture around work and systems of labor which segregate individuals based on social divisions stigmatize and stereotype women. This renders women's labor invisible while stereotyping women as deviant relative to men.

Some claim that we value certain types of labor less because they are worth less based on merit. The importance of reproductive labor undermines this claim. Few things are more important than birthing and "raising children, tending to the disabled and the sick, aiding the elderly, and giving succor to the dying: few things are of more societal importance."¹⁵⁷ Still, this labor goes unpaid, or is paid with low wages and few benefits, unrecognized, and unaccounted for even though unpaid "care workers provide the infrastructure that lets formal labor exist."¹⁵⁸ There is no productive labor without reproductive labor.¹⁵⁹ But we also dismiss women's

¹⁵⁶ Weeks, 9-10.

¹⁵⁷ Lowrey, *Give People Money*, 151.

¹⁵⁸ Lowrey, 151.

¹⁵⁹ Lowrey, 152.

productive labor. Women disproportionately enter lower-paid and female-dominated occupations, but they are directly influenced by societal norms, discrimination, and other forces which influence their decisions to enter these fields.¹⁶⁰

To solve these problems, we need a policy that does not try to fit women into the mold of the male wage worker.¹⁶¹ Existing policies simply “add women and stir” when they try to be inclusive, treating them as “subjects without changing the tools of analysis.”¹⁶² If we are to undermine oppressive hierarchies of race and gender, we cannot maintain structures which devalue or erase some forms of labor because they do not fit with the dominant groups’ interpretations, experiences, and life patterns. Unlike potential reforms which try to incorporate women into existing systems of labor, UBI offers an alternative route that acknowledges that all people contribute to society through some form of participation. UBI would compensate women for their unpaid labor and reject the notion that those who perform it do not contribute to society.¹⁶³ It would also recognize the value of and thereby bolster the wages of women of color who are most often paid caregivers, as well as compensate women for their “second shift.”¹⁶⁴

Despite UBI’s benefits, it could reinforce gendered divisions of labor. Women could withdraw from the labor force, thus reversing at least some of the progress they have made in

¹⁶⁰ Lowrey, 163.

¹⁶¹ Eva Feder Kittay, “From Welfare to a Public Ethic of Care,” in *Women and Welfare: Theory and Practice in the United States and Europe*, eds. Nancy Hirschmann and Ulrike Liebert (New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 2001), 38-64.

¹⁶² Ailsa McKay, “Rethinking Work and Income Maintenance Policy: Promoting Gender Equality Through a Citizens’ Basic Income,” *Feminist Economics* 7, no. 1 (2011): 102.

¹⁶³ Lowrey, 152-153.

¹⁶⁴ Lowrey, 163-64.

recent decades.¹⁶⁵ But the opposite could also occur. Men who may have previously been discouraged from performing caregiving labor that may be important to and fulfilling for them may come to view caregiving work as a viable and respectable option. UBI would hopefully reduce their worries about the economic cost of undertaking traditionally feminine, less generously compensated activities. This would liberate both men and women from societal standards which render feminized experiences invisible and stigmatize their activities as less valuable. UBI would empower men and women alike to pursue the activities which suit them best. By undermining women's label as the deviant Other and normalizing their experiences, UBI challenges the idea that men's life patterns alone are typical and thus does a *good* job at undermining cultural imperialism.

FJG's effectiveness at undermining cultural imperialism largely depends upon the type of jobs guarantee implemented. On one end of the spectrum, a jobs guarantee which provides services in areas of child, elder, and health care would help gain respect for traditionally feminine caregiving labor.¹⁶⁶ Indeed, "true full employment would require an expansive view of worthy labor" beyond "white men employed in steel mills and coal mines."¹⁶⁷ A gender-inclusive jobs guarantee could pay women a salary and benefits to stay home with their children, although this blurs the line between a jobs guarantee and a caregiver income. On the other end of the spectrum we can imagine a jobs guarantee that is inaccessible for many women because it

¹⁶⁵ Barbara Bergmann, "A Swedish-Style Welfare State or Basic Income: Which Should Have Priority?" *Politics & Society* 32, no. 1 (2004): 107-118.

¹⁶⁶ Ron Baiman, Bill Barclay, Sidney Hollander, Haydar Kurban, Joseph Persky, Elce Redmond, Mel Rothenberg, "A Permanent Jobs Program for the U.S.: Economic Restructuring to Meet Human Needs," *The Review of Black Political Economy* 39, no. 1 (2012): 29-41.

¹⁶⁷ Erik Loomis, "The Case for a Federal Jobs Guarantee," *New York Times*, April 25, 2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/25/opinion/sanders-booker-gillibrand-humphrey-hawkins.html>.

requires full-time work without providing child care, or because it needlessly prevents them from staying home with their children due to their financial limitations.

The gender-inclusive jobs guarantee may undermine cultural imperialism by legitimizing caregiving labor. This would enable men and women to caregive freely, fulfilling their duties to others and allowing them to raise their families. But another type of jobs guarantee would perpetuate cultural imperialism because all Americans would be required to conform to men's life patterns as full-time workers and would reinforce the idea that formal employment is the only labor that deserves acknowledgment through pay. The underlying logic of a jobs guarantee, however, does not inherently undermine or reinforce cultural imperialism, so it would do a *fair* job of undermining cultural imperialism.

Violence

Many social groups suffer from systematic violence. This involves living “with the knowledge that they must fear random, unprovoked attacks on their persons or property, which have no motive but to damage, humiliate, or destroy the person.”¹⁶⁸ The social contexts that surround acts of violence which make them “possible and even acceptable” qualify it as a form of oppression rather than just an interpersonal issue.¹⁶⁹ Violence is “systemic” because it is “directed at members of a group simply because they are members of that group.”¹⁷⁰ It is oppressive because it instills fear in members of particular social groups, namely women, members of LGBTQ+ communities, and Black Americans. Violence also exists “as a social

¹⁶⁸ Young, 61.

¹⁶⁹ Young, 61.

¹⁷⁰ Young, 62.

practice” because “everyone knows [it] happens and will happen again,” and is often enacted by groups of people, particularly young men.¹⁷¹ These acts are motivated by fear and hatred, are tolerated, and seldom punished.¹⁷² Young argues, to “the degree that institutions and social practices encourage, tolerate, or enable the perpetration of violence against members of specific groups, those institutions and practices are unjust and should be reformed.”¹⁷³

This face of oppression accounts for several types of power-based violence which we can assign to three primary categories: hate-motivated violence, state violence, and sexual and domestic violence. “Women,” as a broad and internally diverse category, suffer from all forms of violence. Some women, however, are more at risk of certain kinds of violence than others. For example, transgender women are at risk for hate-motivated violence that results in unpredictable attacks against them. This is especially clear when we consider the experiences of transgender women of color, whose intersecting racial, sexual, and gender identities interact to make them vulnerable to random attacks, state violence, and sexual violence.¹⁷⁴

Implementing UBI nationally would help alleviate some but not all forms of violence. This is because the financial security that UBI provides can be a means of escape on for women when they face violence, but it leaves intact the root causes of violence, which include larger structures such as racial patriarchy. Escapable violence includes those types which would be avoidable if a woman had the means to leave the arena, such as a household or workplace, in

¹⁷¹ Young, 62.

¹⁷² Young, 63.

¹⁷³ Young, 63.

¹⁷⁴ “Violence Against the Transgender Community in 2018,” Human Rights Campaign, <https://www.hrc.org/resources/violence-against-the-transgender-community-in-2018>.

which the violence is occurring. For instance, if a woman has the means to leave a partner who abuses her or to search for a job where her employer does not harass or intimidate her, she can escape the source of her violence. Inescapable violence, which should not be thought of as more or less serious than other forms, is less avoidable due to its unpredictability. There is not one perpetrator, like a romantic partner or employer, but many potential perpetrators whose actions are impossible to predict and therefore harder to prevent. Thus, location becomes the primary distinction between those forms of violence which UBI might combat and those it would leave untouched. When women are experiencing violence within an escapable space, UBI can help them. Otherwise, it does very little to protect them.

Implementing a FJG would help and fail women in similar ways. The consistent option of a full-time job, like the security of a basic income, would enable women to escape violent workplaces and relationships when they may otherwise lack stability. This financial security would still fail to protect women from hate-motivated crimes or acts of state violence. Additionally, although financial security provides an exit option for those women who are in abusive employment situations, there remains the risk that other participants and supervisors in a federal jobs program would pose a threat to women workers. Any federal jobs program should be carefully regulated with workplace and civil rights protections to avoid discriminatory practices and should provide reliable support for women who wish to report harassment or violence without risking their livelihood.

When it comes to more easily predictable and thus escapable violence, a full-time job may not be the most accessible exit option for some women. Women who face more burdens when it comes to entering a workplace, due to complications such as caregiving responsibilities

or disabilities, may be less able to rely on a jobs program. However, this could be accounted for with full-time childcare or forms of employment which include people with different abilities. Still, neither UBI nor FJG address the causes of violence, so they both do a *fair* job of addressing this face of oppression.

Conclusions

Based on this analysis of UBI and FJG, each policy's respective ability to undermine the faces of oppression largely depends on the precise terms of policy that are ultimately implemented. Upon a closer look at the logic underpinning them, it appears that UBI would do a better job at confronting the faces of oppression that affect women. FJG's downside is that it may exacerbate marginalization and exploitation, and it does not do a particularly good job of undermining any of the root causes of women's oppression. UBI, on the other hand, does not exacerbate any of the faces and directly combats the causes of women's marginalization and cultural imperialism. Overall, UBI is more closely aligned with the social justice framework and would do more for women than FJG.

Policy Implementation

This section discusses practical issues complicating the policies of UBI and FJG including cost, levels of support, and their implementation in other countries.

Cost

Both UBI and FJG programs are expensive. Their cost depends on the type of UBI or FJG implemented. To eliminate poverty, according to 2017 federal poverty guidelines, UBI would need to be \$12,060 per adult citizen and \$4,180 per dependent under 18. If we want provide a ten percent cushion above this poverty-alleviating minimum, UBI would cost around

\$3 trillion.¹⁷⁵ Generous estimates for the cost of FJG are lower at around \$543 billion.¹⁷⁶

Decreased costs in other programs and increased and new taxes could offset these totals. Progressives should be cautious about cutting social programs, particularly because this aspect of UBI can provide a trojan horse for those who wish to cut social programs that many Americans need. Still, both UBI and FJG would reduce the number of people who require additional assistance. Considering the fact that studies estimate \$153 billion per year is spent on public assistance programs due to low wages, we can see that the benefits of UBI or FJG would reduce the costs of other programs. The Supplemental Assistance Nutrition Program (SNAP), the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), unemployment insurance, and TANF would require less funding once people had either a basic income or a well-paying job with benefits.¹⁷⁷ Increased and new taxes on the financially well-off should precede any cuts to social programs. Carbon taxes, financial transaction taxes, and land-value taxes would distribute wealth more equitably without further burdening those in the lower and middle classes. An additional benefit of this approach is that increased taxes on corporations and eliminating subsidies to fossil fuel

¹⁷⁵ Scott Santens, "How to Reform Welfare and Taxes to Provide Every American Citizen with a Basic Income," June 5, 2017, *Medium*, <https://medium.com/economicsecproj/how-to-reform-welfare-and-taxes-to-provide-every-american-citizen-with-a-basic-income-bc67d3f4c2b8>.

¹⁷⁶ Mark Paul, William Darity, Jr., and Darrick Hamilton, "The Federal Job Guarantee: A Policy to Achieve Permanent Full Employment," Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, March 9, 2018, <https://www.cbpp.org/research/full-employment/the-federal-job-guarantee-a-policy-to-achieve-permanent-full-employment>.

¹⁷⁷ Paul, "The Federal Job Guarantee."

companies have the simultaneous effect of funding new social programs while helping the environment and redistributing wealth.¹⁷⁸

Discussions of these costs must include the positive impact that UBI and FJG would likely have on Americans' spending power and the labor market. A jobs guarantee, for instance, would employ approximately 10 million workers.¹⁷⁹ When we consider the costs offset by UBI or FJG, along with new taxes that will make our tax system more fair, neither policy is so exceptionally expensive.

Those who remain skeptical about whether these programs warrant these changes to our budget should consider the exorbitant cost of the status quo. Harry Holzer, a labor economist at Georgetown, "calculated that child poverty alone costs the United States about 4 percent of GDP a year, every year, by reducing productivity and work output, increasing the incidence of crime, and pushing up public health expenditures of children when they become adults. That adds up to roughly \$700 billion a year, a little more than the United States spends on the military and a little less than it spends on Social Security."¹⁸⁰ Without even considering more pressing issues of justice, poverty is far more expensive than effective social programs.

Support

Neither UBI nor FJG receive majority public or political support. The progressive think-tank Data for Progress has conducted polling to gauge the American electorate's interest in these policies. Overall, FJG is more popular with voters and policymakers than is UBI.

¹⁷⁸ Santens, "How to Reform Welfare and Taxes to Provide Every American Citizen with a Basic Income."

¹⁷⁹ Paul, "The Federal Job Guarantee."

¹⁸⁰ Lowrey, 128.

Among Whites, those with the least education expressed the most support for UBI. There is net support for UBI among working-class Whites, but college-educated Whites reject UBI. UBI is most popular among working class people of color, followed by college-educated people of color. Seventeen percent of college-educated people of color and ten percent of working class people of color support UBI.¹⁸¹ These numbers are not especially encouraging, and UBI also receives almost no political support. In 2016, Hillary Clinton briefly considered including it in her platform, but said her campaign “couldn’t make the numbers work.”¹⁸² Andrew Yang, a 2020 Democratic presidential candidate, supports UBI but his campaign has received little attention.¹⁸³

Several policymakers have expressed support for the idea of a jobs guarantee. Senators Gillibrand, Booker, and Sanders, and Representative Ocasio-Cortez support either regional experiments or FJG’s national implementation. Meanwhile, 55 percent of eligible voters support a Green Job Guarantee and Community Job Guarantee. Data for Progress distinguishes between these two policy ideas because a Green Job Guarantee specifically describes a strategy to make our labor market and economy more environmentally sustainable. Working class people of color are the most likely to support a jobs guarantee, and 39 percent of those surveyed expressed support. They were followed closely by college-educated people of color, and then

¹⁸¹ “Polling the Left Agenda,” Data for Progress, 2018, <https://www.dataforprogress.org/polling-the-left-agenda/>.

¹⁸² Dylan Matthews, “Hillary Clinton almost ran for president on a universal basic income,” Vox, September 12, 2017, <https://www.vox.com/policy-and-politics/2017/9/12/16296532/hillary-clinton-universal-basic-income-alaska-for-america-peter-barnes>.

¹⁸³ Sara Bizarro, “United States: Andrew Yang is running for President in 2020 on the platform of Universal Basic Income,” Basic Income Earth Network, April 8, 2018, <https://basicincome.org/news/2018/04/united-states-andrew-yang-is-running-for-president-in-2020-on-the-platform-of-universal-basic-income/>.

college-educated Whites. Only 27 percent of the White working class supported a jobs guarantee.¹⁸⁴

Attempts

Attempts to implement UBI and FJG are going on around the world. Pilot programs exist in Finland, India, Brazil, Scotland, the Netherlands, and Kenya. Alaska enacted a form of basic income in 1980 when it established its Permanent Fund Dividend,¹⁸⁵ and Namibia completed its pilot program in 2009. Both India and Argentina have implemented jobs guarantees with encouraging results.

The majority of UBI pilot programs remain incomplete, but cash transfer programs in India, Kenya, Namibia, and Alaska have produced encouraging results. There are two pilot programs in West Delhi's Raghbir Nagar slum and the other in rural villages in Madhya Pradesh. The Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA) kicked off fundraising for the rural program, then the Delhi government joined with them to organize the urban project.¹⁸⁶ In Kenya, the U.S. charity GiveDirectly established cash transfers based on its belief that this form of aid would prove more effective than providing things or services tied to paternalistic conditions.¹⁸⁷ Namibia had a similar pilot program from 2007 to 2009 in two villages where voluntary funds provided a basic income to each of the 1,000 men, women, and children in the villages. Alaska,

¹⁸⁴ "Polling the Left Agenda," Data for Progress.

¹⁸⁵ "Historical Timeline," Alaska Department of Revenue: Permanent Fund Dividend, <https://pfd.alaska.gov/Division-Info/Historical-Timeline>.

¹⁸⁶ Malcolm Torry, "Has it ever happened?" in *Money for everyone: Why we need a citizen's income* (Bristol University Press, 2013), 65-80.

¹⁸⁷ Anne Lowrey, "The Poverty Hack," in *Give People Money: How a Universal Basic Income Would End Poverty, Revolutionize Work, and Remake the World* (New York: Crown, 2018), 73-94.

the only state to establish a basic income program in the U.S., established a Permanent Fund that provides dividends funded by royalties from oil extraction annually to each resident. These programs have had positive effects, including reduced poverty, increased school attendance, increased economic activity, and increased independence for women. In India, where all cash transfers are made to the woman of the family, families have mainly spent their cash transfers on food, healthcare, and education. School attendance increased threefold, and more girls in particular are in secondary school. SEWA also reported that cash transfers made it so women were no longer entirely dependent on their husbands, regardless whether they were initially wealthy or poor.¹⁸⁸

GiveDirectly's program in Kenya echoed these results and undermined concerns that cash recipients would consume more vice products or become lazier. They did not—instead, ownership of productive assets like cows and farming equipment increased, the poverty rate and malnutrition decreased, and savings increased. Just as in India, women especially benefited from the program because it reduced domestic violence.¹⁸⁹ Namibia's results echo those in India and Kenya, where poverty and child malnutrition decreased, school attendance increased, women gained independence, and women's economic status rose relative to men's.¹⁹⁰

Few UBI experiments have occurred in the U.S. The Alaska Permanent Fund is the closest policy to UBI that has been implemented within the U.S. Since 1977, Alaska has received royalties from oil extraction on state-owned land. The state saved 20 percent of these royalties in

¹⁸⁸ Torry, "Has it ever happened?" 74-75.

¹⁸⁹ Lowrey, "The Poverty Hack," 73-94.

¹⁹⁰ Torry, 69-74.

the Alaska Permanent Fund. The dividends are distributed annually to every resident who has lived in Alaska for at least one year. They are significantly lower than those suggested in most UBI proposals—in 2011, the dividend paid to each citizen was \$1,174. Nonetheless, these funds have increased personal income and therefore consumption and employment, specifically helping the poor. In 1980, Alaska's net income inequality was the highest in the U.S., and now it is the lowest. In fact, it is the only state in the U.S. in which inequality has decreased during the past twenty years.¹⁹¹

Both India and Argentina have attempted to implement jobs guarantees. In 2005 India invested 5.3 billion dollars to implement The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA). The aim has been to reduce income and food insecurity in rural areas by providing supplemental employment to rural households and empowering women. MGNREGA guarantees adult members of rural households 100 days of employment each year. If the government fails to provide employment within 15 days of an application, the applicant receives unemployment insurance instead. This employment scheme has produced positive results so far, including a wage floor for laborers, increasing wages overall, and ensuring flexible hours for women. However, MGNREGA has been plagued with some of the same problems that occurred under American New Deal policies. Pay discrepancies exist between men and women, lack of adequate child care prevented women from working as many hours as men, and many women reported mistreatment by site supervisors.¹⁹²

¹⁹¹ Torry, 65-67.

¹⁹² Rhonda Breitzkreuz, Carley-Jane Stanton, Nurmaiya Brady, John Pattison-Williams, E.D. King, Chudhury Mishra, and Brent Swallow, "The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme: A Policy Solution to Rural Poverty in India?" *Development Policy Review* 35, no. 3 (2017): 397-417.

Argentina established a similar program in 2002. At its height, the Plan Jefes y Jefas de Hogar (“Jefas”) employed as much as 5 percent of the population and cost 1 percent of GDP. The plan was offered only to unemployed heads of households with children under 18, persons with disabilities, and pregnant women, and was limited to one head of each household. Jobs included community service such as food kitchens and environmental support, small construction, agriculture, and producing goods for vulnerable communities.

The World Bank concluded that the program was highly successful in providing needed services, increasing poor households’ income, and empowering women. Unemployment insurance and welfare for poor families are now replacing Jefas, however, because of officials’ concerns with the program, namely, the its feminization and concerns over productivity and waste. Jefas, like jobs programs under the New Deal, demonstrates the importance of establishing a long-term right to a job to avoid politicians revoking support after an economic crisis is resolved.¹⁹³

Attempts to implement these policies demonstrate they are not outside the realm of possibility. Though transformative social policies have been and continue to be dismissed based on sticker-shock and lack of political will, progress will require us to evaluate policies based on whether they help our communities. For example, Argentinian official became concerned that bakeries that provided bread to workers’ poor neighbors under the Jefas program were not “efficient.” This reflects a fundamental misunderstanding about how policymakers should analyze the effectiveness of public policy.¹⁹⁴ Efficiency is not and should not be the *sine qua non*

¹⁹³ L. Randall Wray, “Lessons from Argentina’s Employment Guarantee,” *Economic and Political Weekly* 41, no. 23 (2006): 2293-2296.

¹⁹⁴ Wray, “Lessons from Argentina’s Employment Guarantee.”

for evaluating social programs. Excessive reliance on this measure has repeatedly resulted in policies that neglect vulnerable populations.

That being said, many who favor UBI over FJG may wonder if they are wasting their advocacy on policies which will never be implemented. Although neither UBI nor FJG are likely to be implemented in the immediate future, FJG currently receives more public and political support in the U.S. Its likelihood of implementation looks especially strong when we consider its price tag of \$543 billion compared to \$3 trillion.

Conclusion

Sexism, racism, and classism embedded within our welfare policies have privileged some Americans while stigmatizing and oppressing others. We need new policies that account for these problems and actively combat the damage that previous welfare policies have inflicted. This requires us to evaluate potential policies not just based on their economic consequences, but also on how effectively they undermine the injustices that harm their intended beneficiaries. Due to women's unique experiences under our past welfare policies, we need different policies which undermine the oppression they experience in the form of exploitation, marginalization, powerlessness, cultural imperialism, and violence. The justice-based framework employed above to evaluate two potential policies, UBI and FJG, demonstrates how advocates and policymakers can center vulnerable groups' needs when discussing the potential benefits and consequences of public policies.

My analysis shows that UBI more effectively challenges the root causes of women's oppression via marginalization and cultural imperialism. That said, not all UBI or FJG policies are created equal. Although theoretical analysis reveals that UBI is the best option for women in

principle, the intentions behind and the particular type of UBI or FJG implemented will have varying implications for women. We should not, in the interest of theoretical purity, favor any form of UBI over a justice-oriented and woman-friendly form of FJG. Labeling a potential policy as a jobs guarantee or a basic income matters less than the intention behind the policy and whose needs are considered before it is implemented. Based on this paper, one cannot conclude that UBI or FJG is inherently preferable to the other. Instead, whether those crafting policy center or neglect vulnerable populations' needs will determine if a policy helps these groups. Still, due to its potential to further the cause of women's liberation, UBI should remain a long-term goal as we transition toward a more just society.

Although analyzing past and possible future welfare policies does not lend itself to a black-and-white conclusion, this paper shows why it is important to prioritize justice concerns when evaluating and advocating for public policies and demonstrates how this can be done. Justice-oriented frameworks and specific heuristics like those Young offers may not clarify all issues surrounding a particular policy, but they offer guidance and raise important concerns which advocates and policymakers should not neglect when they consider how their actions will harm or help oppressed groups and women specifically. If we want to challenge the racial, economic, and gender oppression that remain pervasive in the U.S., we need to prioritize social justice consistently and unapologetically.

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