**UNIVERSITY OF SZEGED FACULTY OF ECONOMICS AND BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION**

# THESIS

# The Right to Exist: The Position of Universal Basic Income in the Works of the Most Influential Contemporary Philosophers

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS:

**CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION** 2

1.1 Background of the study 2

1.2 Problem statement 3

1.3 Research methodology 4

1.4 Research question 5

**CHAPTER 2: WHAT IS UNIVERSAL BASIC INCOME?** 6

2.1 The Definition of UBI 6

2.2 History of UBI - Thomas More, Poverty, Crime, Retributive justice, UBI 7

2.3 History of UBI - Thomas Paine and Thomas Spence on How to Fund UBI 9

2.4 History of UBI - Modern Version of UBI 10

**CHAPTER 3: THE POSITION OF UNIVERSAL BASIC INCOME IN THE WORKS OF MOST INFLUENTIAL CONTEMPORARY PHILOSOPHERS** 11

3.1 Arthur Schopenhauer, Leisure Time, Boredom, Basic Needs, Art, and UBI 11

3.2 Karl Marx, Socialism, Communism, Alienation, and UBI 14

3.3 William James, Pragmatism, Truth, and UBI 15

3.4 Bertrand Russell, Idleness, Working Hours, and UBI 17

3.5 Michel Foucault, Negative Income Tax, Power, Anarchism, and UBI 18

3.6 John Rawls, Theory of Justice, Inequality, and UBI 20

3.7 Robert Nozick, Distributive Justice, State, and UBI 22

3.8 Noam Chomsky, Anarchism, and UBI 23

3.9 Slavoj Žižek, Automation, Advanced Capitalism, and UBI 25

3.10 Peter Singer, Utilitarianism, Poverty, and UBI: 27

**CHAPTER 4: GENERAL DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION** 29

4.1 Conclusion of the Thesis 29

**BIBLIOGRAPHY:** 33

# CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

In the first chapter of the thesis, I will present the background, research problem, purpose, research methodology, and research question

## 1.1 Background of the study

In my thesis, I examine the position of Universal Basic Income (abbreviation: UBI) in the works of most influential contemporary philosophers. The term "contemporary philosophy" is philosophical jargon that frequently refers to Western philosophy's 20th and 21st centuries. However, I start from the 19th century to establish a better view and understanding of 20th and 21st-century philosophy.

The thesis follows a chronological sequence. It starts with the relevance of UBI in 19th-century philosophers (such as Arthur Schopenhauer, Karl Marx). It ends with 21st-century philosophers (such as Slavoj Žižek, Peter Singer). The thesis analyzes UBI through the works of notable philosophers on an individual level. However, it may include a philosophical movement in general (Utilitarianism, Anarchism). Still, the main focus will be on the authors and their works' relevance to UBI.

Originally, I had a different thesis topic: “The Observed and Potential Behavioral Effects of UBI.” However, I have decided on this current topic. There are several reasons:

(1) Besides the fact that I found the philosophical side of UBI appealing, I have to admit that the position of UBI in contemporary philosophy offers more material to work with. I recommend a “potential future effects” research question for students looking for a topic for a master's thesis and who have experience in scientific predictions based on limited secondary data.

(2) As of 2022, there are still only a few influential books and articles on UBI's relevance to contemporary philosophy. Therefore, I have a motivation to reveal some undiscovered connections between UBI and the ideas of contemporary philosophers.

(3) I want to pursue an academic career. I am considering continuing my education in an interdisciplinary program for a master's degree. It is only then that I plan to choose a focus area for

the PhD. Programs such as "M.Sc. Politics, Economics and Philosophy" will be my top priority due to my wide intellectual interest and willingness to study multiple disciplines simultaneously. Thus, after consulting with my supervisor, I concluded that writing a thesis covering a philosophical aspect of a socioeconomic policy would strengthen my background and increase the probability of accepting my further applications. Our similar research interests with my supervisor Dr Judit Gébert who has a double master's degree in Philosophy and Political Science, led me to decide that this is the most relevant and ideally suited topic for us to work on. Moreover, she has a distributive justice-related thesis[1] and political philosophy articles on UBI[2].

Lastly, I want to express one concern beforehand. Since the thesis includes all the opinions and works of respectable philosophers and my humble opinions and evaluations on them, there is a possibility that a reader can find my writing as unobjective and too supportive of UBI. I can openly proclaim that I have sympathy for the concept of UBI, and I am skeptical about the current system on the distribution of wealth. Nevertheless, trying to be objective is my ultimate goal in this thesis like it was in any of my previous assignments during my 7 semesters' studies at the University of Szeged. Nevertheless, there is no guarantee of a potential failure in the objectivity in some paragraphs, especially when the discussions lead to more sensitive areas that are an inevitable nature of the intended research question.

### 1.2 Problem statement

Universal Basic Income has become a popular idea in the last few years. The year 2020 played a significant role in the acceleration of the popularity of UBI. Since the middle of the 20th century, academic circles have been discussing UBI often; however, it is emergent that ordinary people have started to question the idea of UBI. Nettle et al. (2021a) found significantly more support for UBI adoption during the COVID-19 pandemic and its aftermath than during regular times. From worldwide Google search trends, I found a 100% interest rate in the topic "Universal Basic Income" in 2020 March - a peak period of global panic regarding COVID-19. In the post-COVID era of 2021 October, it dropped to 29% interest rate. One of the other reasons why UBI is

[1] Gébert, J. (2012). The Metric and The Pattern of Social Advantages. Master's Thesis in Political Science MA, Supervisor: Andres Moles, Central European University.
[2] Gébert, J. & Tőzsér, J. (2019). Political philosophy guide to social deliberation about unconditional basic income.

so popular is the improvement of Artificial Intelligence. Scientists predict that machines will replace 47% of all jobs in the United States of America within two decades (Oxford Martin School, 2013, as cited in Grose, 2017). Food preparation assistants, laborers in mining, drivers, fishery laborers are some of the workers whose professions carry over a 30% risk of being replaced by machines soon (Nedelkoska and Quintini, 2018, as cited in Georgieff and Milanez, 2021). Full Self-Driving Capability of Tesla cars is one of the examples that some jobs will disappear during this decade. Considering the progress by far, it is almost certain that, by 2030, cars will drive themselves in a much safer, smoother, flawless way than the best professional drivers.

The more attention UBI gets the more analysis from the different perspectives it requires. UBI is a topic connected with many academic disciplines such as sociology, psychology, economics, politics. Wehner (2019) argues that behavioral changes from "effortless income" could affect many areas, including consumption, saving, leisure activities, drug abuse, solidarity, health care, education, and professional training, among others.

Many people are confused about UBI and what it means. The vision of this thesis is to clarify the connection and compatibility between UBI and the contemporary philosophical arguments and discussions Thus, this thesis intends to fill the gap in the analysis of the relation of UBI in contemporary philosophy. "Is it just to give UBI?" "Is it just to ignore the concept of UBI?" "How is UBI positioned in the works of contemporary philosophers? "Do contemporary philosophers support UBI or not? "Are people supposed to work in the first place?", "How can UBI contribute to justice and equality?" are some of the problems (questions) that I try to research in the thesis.

### 1.3 Research methodology

> "If I have seen further, it is by standing on the shoulders of Giants."
>
> Isaac Newton (1642-1727)

I will be using the literature review methodology for my thesis. I will collect and comment on available scholarly sources, books, and other literature related to the research question. I intend to contribute to the discussion of UBI by collecting and connecting some opinions from

contemporary philosophers and identifying their position. I have mainly collected the data with the help of institutional access to online libraries besides publicly available traditional and digital libraries. Furthermore, there are hundreds of contemporary philosophers; thus, I had to choose some of them to keep an acceptable length of research.

In my selection of philosophers, I have referred to the book of Brian Duignan called "The 100 Most Influential Philosophers of All Time"[3], published by Britannica. Among 100 philosophers, I have eliminated 58 philosophers whom I considered non-contemporary philosophers: From Pythagoras to Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel. I found that only 42 of them are relevant to contemporary philosophy, from Arthur Schopenhauer to Peter Singer. I have decided on 10 philosophers whom I found to be more relevant to the topic of UBI than others based on several criteria such as (1) the number and availability of the published books, (2) connection with justice, equality, ethics, economy, politics, and similar fields, (3) my familiarity with the works of the philosophers. For these reasons, especially the third, the length and the depth of the paragraphs about different philosophers may not be equal.

In conclusion, these are the philosophers: 1. Arthur Schopenhauer, 2. Karl Marx, 3. William James, 4. Bertrand Russell, 5. Michel Foucault, 6. John Rawls, 7. Robert Nozick, 8. Noam Chomsky, 9. Peter Singer. Contemporary philosophers that I have not included in the thesis like Thomas Kuhn, Ludwig Wittgenstein, Saul Kripke were focused on much more different topics of philosophy such as, respectively, philosophy of science, philosophy of language, philosophy of logic. The only philosopher that is not from Duignan's list is 10. Slavoj Žižek.

### 1.4 Research question

"What is the position of Universal Basic Income in the works of most influential contemporary philosophers?" is the main research question. The thesis aims to identify the position and relevance of UBI in the works of contemporary philosophers

[3] Duignan, B. (2010). The 100 Most Influential Philosophers of All Time. Britannica.

# CHAPTER 2: WHAT IS UNIVERSAL BASIC INCOME?

In the second chapter of the thesis, I will present the background information about Universal Basic Income, its definition, history, etc.

## 2.1 The Definition of UBI

Basic Income, Citizen's Income, Unconditional Basic Income, or mainly called Universal Basic Income, has many names and definitions. In this thesis, I will use the abbreviation UBI to maintain an easy and smooth reading.

Having many definitions about UBI can be understood by the fact that the popularization of the idea is relatively new. The fixed definition is not possible yet since many thinkers, economists, policymakers, philosophers try to improve the main idea of UBI and its vital characteristics. Thus, it is crucial to see UBI as an incomplete and progressing program. UBI is not an alternative to working, but a socio-economic strategy to fight against poverty, unemployment, and other sociological, philosophical, economic issues. Even the most passionate advocates of UBI would not think that it is a realistic goal to achieve a worldwide acceptance of UBI by tomorrow. Barack Obama, former U.S. president for 8 years, expressed his opinion/prediction that the debate about UBI will be with us in the next 10-20 years (McFarland, 2016). Elon Musk, on many occasions, said that UBI or a similar version is a strong candidate for being a response to unemployment due to the massive progress in technology (Brown, 2020; Sheffey, 2021).

Philippe Van Parijs is one of the top experts in the UBI concept, and he has been publishing books and articles since the 1980s on this topic. In 1986, he was one of the founding members of the Basic Income European Network (BIEN). Thus, according to my readings and research, his definition of UBI is the most referred to and comprehensive one. In his latest book, he gives the UBI definition as:

> "An Unconditional Basic Income is a regular cash income paid to all, on an individual basis, without means test or work requirement." (Van Parijs & Vanderborght, 2017)

There are certain features of UBI that are common in many definitions. Hasdell (2020) summarizes that these are 1. Universal, 2. Unconditional, 3. Cash, 4. Individual, 5. Periodic.

As I said above, the definition of UBI has no consensus yet. There are still ongoing debates about some aspects of the UBI characteristics. Some of the frequent questions are:

Does "universal" in the definition mean everyone, including children? Usually, "everyone" means the citizens of a country; however, can "everyone" mean all the people currently living in a country, including the foreigners with a residence permit? Shouldn't there be at least one or two primary conditions for UBI? Atkinson (2015), a defender of Participation Income, suggested that there must be a qualifying condition for basic income.

The majority of the small-scale UBI experiments, such as those in Germany, Finland, Stockton (USA), have chosen adult citizens for the experiment. Therefore, it seems that the children and non-citizens will not be the main target of early UBI phases.

It is useful to mention in the earlier stage of the thesis, I do not believe that cash money alone is able to solve and annihilate problems such as poverty and unemployment if the political administration, institutions, officials misuse their position and reputation, and do not perform well in their works in terms of accountability, transparency, efficiency, etc. Although there is no official and highly credible list about the richest political leaders, we will see Russia, and tons of undeveloped countries such as Thailand, United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, North Korea, Chile, Pakistan, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan, Sudan be at the top of many unofficial lists. These are the countries in which the welfare of the population lags far behind the developed countries of the world. UBI is obliged to wither away where Autocracy reigns because the idea of UBI is strictly connected with the emphasis on freedom and care.

### 2.2 History of UBI - Thomas More, Poverty, Crime, Retributive justice, UBI

The idea of Universal Basic Income is not new. Many people consider "Utopia," written in 1516 by Sir Thomas More, as the first introduction of UBI. More (1965) wrote a scene where a character in the book called Raphael Hythloday happened to be dining with the Cardinal and one English lawyer. The conversation came to the point where the English lawyer was confused about why people continue to steal when they know and see death penalties for these actions. Raphael

explained that this should not surprise anyone. The reason, Thomas More wrote, is that no punishment can make people stop stealing while they are starving to death. The poor can always say "nihil habeo, nihil curo[4]". Corey (2021) asked what the most important thing in life to a middle-aged Tanzanian male hunter-gatherer is, and the reply was "meat and honey." These are compatible with what Abraham Maslow introduced in the 1940s: a hierarchy of needs. Maslow (1943) points out that physiological needs are inarguably the most essential among all needs. If a person can not meet his or her biological needs, he or she can not move up in the pyramid of needs to seek safety, belonging, esteem, and self-actualization. Universal Basic Income is a proposal to help all people, including those stuck in the first layer of the pyramid. UBI supporters believe that a certain amount of regular cash income can help fulfill needs such as food, drink, shelter, clothing, warmth, and others. It would be a giant step in moving to the fairer world.

Unlike the times of Thomas More, the relationship between crime and socioeconomic status is much more complicated and indefinite in today's societies. Now the world has 16 times more population than the year 1500 (United Nations, 1999). We have changed the way we live in many aspects (e.g., urbanization, technology, transportation) that cause a complex relationship between crime and socioeconomic status. However, we can see from the statistics that people from lower class and lower income are more likely to commit a crime and be arrested. We should accept that economic and financial reasons lead to a specific ratio of crimes. It seems that life conditions somehow force some people to take illegal actions. Around 67% of detained in jails in the U.S. had under $12,000 annual incomes before the arrest (Alexandre, 2010). Based on the 2004 Bureau of Justice Statistics report, Rabuy and Koft (2015) found that the median annual income for incarcerated people between 27–42 ages is $19,185, which is 41% less than the median annual income for non-incarcerated people at the same ages. If we keep the same sentence and replace "people" with "men," we observe 52% less annual income.

Fajnzylber et al. (2002) found that crime rates and income inequality are positively correlated. Kelly (2000) points out that in the areas of higher income inequality, people who are in disadvantageous positions in society get more incentives to be involved in a crime. Mai and Subramanian (2017) questioned the financial cost of prisons in 45 states in the U.S., and they

[4] I have nothing, and I do not care about anything. Quoted from Marx, K., Fowkes, B., & Mandel, E. (1992). Capital: Volume 1: A Critique of Political Economy (Penguin Classics) (Illustrated ed.). Penguin Classics.

found that, on average, the states spent $33,274 per year per inmate. UBI supporters claim that if we give this money to the people as a UBI, the crime rates will drop alongside the states' cost. This means that UBI is much more than a distributive justice proposal. It defends the notion of justice from multiple aspects. I assume it is not a secret that people from poor neighborhoods get themselves arrested for minor offenses so they can accommodate and be fed three times a day for free in return for "freedom." Moreover, the cost is not only about financial; there are also social and moral costs of mass incarceration.

Knowing these poverty-crime indicators, we can conclude that dealing with poverty is not just an act of compassion by governments but a tool for a safer ruling. Universal Basic Income can be an effective solution for the link between crime and socioeconomic status. I conjecture that the introduction of UBI may decrease the crime rates, especially among the poor. Haarmann et al. (2009) proved that Universal Basic Grant decreased crime rates in Namibia in 2007-2009.

In his book, More suggested a form of universal allocation system as a more effective solution to social inequality and dealing with crimes. He wrote that we should solve the root of the problem by providing everyone with some means of livelihood instead of focusing on harsh and inconclusive punishments. However, More did not explain "means of livelihood" in detail.

### 2.3 History of UBI - Thomas Paine and Thomas Spence on How to Fund UBI

1797 is an important date for the history of UBI. There are two major books published in 1797, and these books are often considered the beginning of the UBI idea in the modern era. These are "Agrarian Justice" by Thomas Paine and "The Rights of Infants" by Thomas Spence.

For Thomas Paine, poverty was a man-made problem and could be resolved through reforms in a civilized society. In "Agrarian Justice," Paine (2000) advocated for a welfare state and creating a national fund backed by collecting taxes from proprietors. He supported a "stakeholder grant" - a one-time payment for the people on the threshold of adulthood. According to his calculations, he concluded that the national fund could afford a grant of £15 for people at the age of 21 and a pension of £10 per year after a person reaches 50. Paine wrote that there would be remaining money from the fund, which could be spent for the disabled. This system that Paine argued is also called asset-based egalitarianism. This proposal intends to sustain young individuals

trying to build their lives by providing them with a form of capital grant and taking care of senior and disabled citizens. In "Agrarian Justice," besides some other works, he carefully mentions the sentence "this is not a charity, but a right of the man." after proposing his egalitarian ideas and solutions. Ackerman and Alstott (1999) proposed "Stakeholder Society" as a modern version of Thomas Paine's ideas by providing eighteen-year-old high school graduates with a cash grant in the U.S. to restore equal opportunity.

The works of Thomas Spence were not as famous as Thomas Paine's and are still hard to find for research. Spence, in his book "The Rights of Infants," criticizes Paine's "Agrarian Justice" by calling his proposals "poor, beggarly stipends" (Cunliffe and Erreygery, 2004).

Thomas Spence had a different idea. He advocated a system where parishes were given land ownership to govern and make land available to all residents. The rentals from houses and land would be paid to the parishes, while unoccupied properties would be leased to the best bidders for seven years. The revenue generated from rental incomes would cover state taxes and fund the collective goods. The surplus income would be distributed evenly among all fellows of parishes (Marangos, 2008).

### 2.4 History of UBI - Modern Version of UBI

The ideas of Paine and Spence were still different from what we call Universal Basic Income today. Joseph Charlier is arguably the first person who advocated for a modern version of UBI, and he called it "a guaranteed minimum" in 1848. This makes the modern version of UBI as old as Communism of Marx. He supported the idea that "territorial dividend" - funded by rents on all properties - should be paid to all people quarterly, and later, he changed it to monthly income. Since Charlier, all contemporary UBI proposals have been offered monthly. He supported this "right" from birth which is even more radical than its current version. He even defended his UBI idea against the critiques such as "it leads to lazy society," which is similar to today's concerns on UBI (Cunliffe and Erreygery, 1999).

The history of UBI is more prosperous than one can expect. C. H. Douglas, Milton Friedman, James Meade, and others also have played a prominent role in introducing and developing the idea of UBI and similar programs. In chapter 3, I will start to analyze the main

research question of this thesis: the position of UBI in contemporary philosophy. By doing so, I will continue to talk about the "history of UBI"; however, it will only cover 19th, 20th, and 21-st century philosophy.

# CHAPTER 3: THE POSITION OF UNIVERSAL BASIC INCOME IN THE WORKS OF MOST INFLUENTIAL CONTEMPORARY PHILOSOPHERS

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In the third chapter of the thesis, I will present the position of UBI in contemporary philosophy.

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### 3.1 Arthur Schopenhauer, Leisure Time, Boredom, Basic Needs, Art, and UBI

Many believe that UBI will bring happiness to our society. For Schopenhauer, boredom is the enemy of happiness. If UBI decreases the working hours, people will have more free time to spend. The question is whether the concept of “boredom” of Schopenhauer from the 1800s is still relevant in the 2020s. Can people still get bored among all these possible hobbies and activities if they work less or do not work at all? Survey research claims that U.S. citizens are bored for more than a third of the year (131 days) because of adult responsibilities, work, tasks, etc. (Knoblauch, 2019). Another finding from the research can serve a pro-UBI standpoint because it reveals that the majority of adults are generally stressed, feeling too “grown-up,” missing childhoods, and tired of too much work.

Human beings are social animals, and they love to play and watch games and sports. The global gaming market, where adult players are the majority, generated total revenues of $180.3 billion in 2021 (Wijman, 2021), and is expanding quickly. An international football event called “UEFA Euro 2020” is considered the most-watched television broadcast of all time, with an estimation of 5.23 billion cumulative live audiences (UEFA, 2021). If one game, one sport unites 66% of the world population, there must be a huge natural human inclination towards enjoying games and sports. Thomas Hobbes or Niccolò Machiavelli would probably blame the nature of

humans for being lazy, useless, or a selfish hedonist, yet I do not think that this is necessarily a negative characteristic of human beings. Many people use game/sport time as an escape route from adult responsibilities. The stress and depression levels (especially after the COVID-19 pandemic), and the suicide rates of human beings are higher than ever in recorded history. Social Media constantly bombing the users with presumably fake happy posts or events. After all, we all just want to feel happy.

For Schopenhauer, true happiness we need is the complete absence of all pains. There is a miserable cycle of will, want and lack, satiety, surfeit, and boredom as the unavoidable model of human suffering (Jacquette, 2005). It is undeniable that a certain degree of completed work by humans in the world is a mere attempt of desperation to escape from pure boredom. Schopenhauer was also promoting a simple, minimalist, and straightforward lifestyle. He always pointed out the importance of fulfillment of basic needs and avoiding more. He is one of the early advocates that wealth does not bring happiness, and we should not chase wealth. In fact, some modern research approves that above a certain amount of annual income (~75,000$), money has an insignificant correlation with happiness and emotional well-being (Kahneman & Deaton, 2010). This is relevant to the satiety concept of Schopenhauer. Nevertheless, a bigger pie of the society does not earn around or above 75,000$ per year.

If UBI can alleviate or eradicate poverty, then UBI can also heal the problem of ignorance and education. On the importance of reading, Schopenhauer (2000) wrote that ignorance degrades only a wealthy man who has more than enough time to read and explore the world. Unlike the ignorant rich man who only seeks pleasure, the ignorant poor man is limited by poverty and neediness, and his labor invades the place of knowledge and thoughts. Schopenhauer makes it clear that some people are involuntarily destined to be ignorant as a lack of equal opportunities in society. It is not the fault of people, but how we constructed societies. The liberated times from the work through UBI would be an opportunity for everyone to read, write, and be engaged in creative, amusing, sporting, artistic, and intellectual tasks. For some people, this kind of life is a long-awaited happy utopia, and for others, it is a dystopia under the tyranny of hedonism.

Would Schopenhauer support UBI? Yes and no.

Yes - I can speculate that Schopenhauer would support UBI regarding the importance that he has given to art (especially music) unlike his predecessor philosophers. For Schopenhauer,

engaging in art is one of the ways to get rid of the existential pain and the suffering of life. UBI defenders always bring the high virtue of engaging in arts from the liberated times of working through UBI. Schopenhauer (1891a) wrote, "Needy surroundings and poverty produce pain; while, if a man is more than well off, he is bored." Therefore, he continues, the lower class is in pain, and the higher class is bored. UBI can reduce the pain that poverty and neediness cause. Schopenhauer (1891b), on multiple occasions, wrote that “it is the upper classes, people of wealth, who are the greatest victims of boredom”. By this, he means people who are wealthy and have no mastery, no deep curiosity in anything. It is not an anti-UBI statement because (1) UBI doesn’t promise to make everyone wealthy, and (2) receiving UBI is not an obstacle to doing an actual satisfying job, and this has been proven many times in several UBI pilot experiments.

No - in the same above-mentioned essay, Schopenhauer explicitly claims that undisturbed leisure is something alien to human nature. For ordinary people, he wrote, undisturbed leisure will be a burden, however, if great intellect meets with undisturbed leisure, then it is a great piece of fortune. Since it would be super optimistic and naive to think that the majority of earth's population possesses a great intellect, we don’t need too much leisure either. The famous pessimism of Schopenhauer is another reason for the answer no. No matter what we change, for Schopenhauer, we will never be complete, and we will feel a certain level of continual dissatisfaction with our lives. Schopenhauer did not write much about economics or politics, and it is tough to say his exact position.

I have mentioned that Schopenhauer highlighted the necessity of the fulfillment of basic needs. However, the definition of "basic needs" is constantly changing as time goes by. Around 60% of the world's population has access to the internet (Johnson, 2021), and 85% of U.S. adults use the internet daily (Perrin & Atske, 2021). After the COVID-19 pandemic, some of the jobs remained to be executed from the home office via the internet. In developed countries, nearly all the bureaucratic work is transferred into the digital world. People pay their utilities, renew their ID cards, access their vaccination certificates and overall health data via the internet. Estonia, for example, is one of the global leaders in digitalization. Thus, the question occurs: has the internet become a basic need? If not yet, when will we feel a necessity to renew Maslow's basic needs category?

### 3.2 Karl Marx, Socialism, Communism, Alienation, and UBI

Socialism is an early phase of communism. If we wonder about the position of UBI in Marx's works, we should probably compare it to socialism which people mainly call a bridge between capitalism and communism. UBI gets the same reaction as being "transition" because it does not suit the main principle of capitalism ("profit by working") and communism ("according to his need"). Does this mean UBI and socialism are compatible?

Firstly, UBI does not suit the socialist principle of "according to his contribution." In both capitalism and socialism, work or contribution determines how much one gets. In capitalism, one gets a profit by producing goods or services, and in socialism, one gets income from the amount of time they contribute to society. UBI, on the other hand, rejects the necessity of any work requirement. UBI is not a reward for one's work or contribution. It is a fixed amount for everyone as a right to exist.

However, what is common between UBI with socialism is the fact that they both focus on equality of opportunity. With these concepts, the most disadvantaged group in society will be able to afford their basic needs. Nevertheless, since UBI is for all, it does not change the income and wealth gap among the social classes. Both UBI and socialism do not promise total inequality and injustice as communism promises. Moreover, UBI gets criticized as being "economically inefficient" because it is for all people, not those who need it.

To sum up, we can call UBI an upgraded version of capitalism with socialist characteristics. This case is similar to the early 20th century when Sidney Webb and his wife Beatrice Webb formulated the idea of "The National Minimum" - today's concept of minimum wage. Webb (1911), a socialist, has mentioned that this minimum wage proposal is only for the necessary basis of a healthy society. It works for either Individualist or Collectivist systems. With his explanation, I think he wanted to persuade the reader that minimum wage is not an evil socialist idea (in 1911, this was a helpful remark), but an efficient way to run capitalism - if this is the way we will continue. In retrospect, the role of minimum wage must have played a significant role in the success of capitalism in the 20th century. UBI is not just a cash transfer. It also means that people will face less stress for their employment choices. In many senses, UBI is compatible with trade/labor unions. The minimum wage example shows that UBI is not the first proposal to upgrade capitalism

with socialist-like features. Fifty years later, economists and policymakers may evaluate UBI as a “minimum wage" proposal, a successful extension of capitalism.

Marx (1844) wrote: “Labor produces not only commodities; it produces itself, and the worker as a commodity. The object which labor produces – labor’s product – confronts it as something alien, as a power independent of the producer”. UBI can be harmonious with Marx's theory of alienation because UBI recipients will have the possibility to choose a job that suits and treats them better. Therefore, they will be more emotionally attached to their jobs and will not feel foreign to the products of their labor. It is, for human dignity, fundamental to find meaning. It is also good and safe for the society that its members find meaning in their lives. It is also possible that people will start to work as an option, not an obligation, which would make them feel psychologically better. UBI can create the opposite effect of alienation. UBI improves mental health, increases motivation and job performance (Mahabir et al., 2021). As a result, it is beneficial for both employee and employer. Obviously, for Marx, UBI can not erase the problem of alienation because the workers will still not own the means of production and they will create surplus value for the capitalists. Under capitalism, labor will always stay as a commodity.

Moreover, UBI would be constructive to overcome the exploitation of labor and increase the bargaining power of employees. This is also one of the main arguments of Erik Olin Wright (2006) in support of UBI as he claims the bargaining position of individual workers will increase with the socialist features of UBI. These would still not satisfy Marx because UBI can not single-handedly give enough bargaining power to employees to fight against the problem of "surplus value."

From the standpoint of Karl Marx, it is an easy claim for me to say that he would not be in favor of UBI because the Marxist approach would suggest that UBI does not end the class conflict but only postpones it.

### 3.3 William James, Pragmatism, Truth, and UBI

William James is one of the founders of the philosophical tradition called “pragmatism”. Merriam-Webster defines pragmatism as:

> "A reasonable and logical way of doing things or of thinking about problems that is based on dealing with specific situations instead of on ideas and theories."

In many senses, UBI fits this pragmatism definition. I would like to split the Merriam-Webster definition of pragmatism into some parts by explaining how it is related to the idea of UBI.

(1) "A reasonable and logical way of doing things" is giving people what they really need and lack, and this is cash money. It is debatable whether or not this action is "logical", but it is definitely one of the most straightforward options. A pragmatic solution would demand the least effort (short-cut) and the highest success. (2) "Dealing with specific situations" can be understood as dealing with unemployment, famine, poor welfare, etc. (3) "Instead of ideas and theories" reminds the fact that there are so many complex theories and alternatives for the social welfare system, distributive justice, economic models, etc. UBI stands as a simple policy.

As long as UBI works, from a pragmatist approach, there is no need for further discussion. James (1922) defines the pragmatic method as "settling metaphysical disputes that otherwise might be interminable". The concept of "truth" in Jamesian Pragmatism is defined in terms of utility. If an idea is useful to believe and effective in practice, then it is the truth. As a contemporary example, I could say that believing in climate change[5] would be pragmatic truth if it increases the overall awareness of the earthlings about the natural environment, and how careful we must be with consumption, manufacturing, deforestation, etc.

There are hundreds of philosophical movements and economic models that claim to be the truth in terms of ethical distribution of wealth, the structure of the society, rewarding methods of working, etc. From this aspect, even though UBI proves itself to be successful, there would be people who would argue for more equality and justice, and this is a democratic right. However, technically speaking, it is impossible to measure the level of equality in all people. At this point, universal acceptance of pragmatism could make a difference. From my understanding of pragmatism, if everybody believes that UBI is good for society, then UBI can be, in fact, good for

[5] Useful to mention that "climate change" is not up to a belief, but a proved scientific fact. Yet, even it was a "belief", it would be a useful one in many aspects.

society. My current political stance is that as long as there is no poverty, the rest of the inequality discussions are not a matter of life and death - in a literal sense.

### 3.4 Bertrand Russell, Idleness, Working Hours, and UBI

Bertrand Russell is a UBI supporter. In his book "Roads to Freedom," Russell (1919) offered "vagabond's wage," which is like the current UBI version. "Vagabond's wage" was a combination of socialist and anarchist principles for the people who want to get enough income to meet their basic needs while engaging in activities they are most passionate about. He gave an example of artists who can spend their time on their artworks. As the name suggests, travellers are another example. Vagabond's wage is not high to live a luxurious life, and it is given regardless of work requirement. Every man, Russell says, could live without work. These definitions are compatible with the current UBI version. “Then nobody would work” - would be the counter-argument. Russell mentions that the number of people who live with the help of “vagabond’s wage” can not be an extreme burden on the economy because not many people are willing to accept voluntary poverty and freedom over light and pleasant work. This is one of the main pro-UBI arguments.

We can see Bertrand Russell's opinions on work/working in his "In Praise of Idleness" essay. According to Bertrand Russell (2004), belief in the virtuousness of work is the main problem of our "modern" approach, and he proposed an organized diminution of work instead. "What if we work 4 hours per day?" he questioned in his essay. For Russell, less work means happier lives. By working less, we will increase the happiness and joy of our society and get rid of negative feelings. Therefore, part-time working should be the future. By working less, we also improve our eagerness and inner motivation to work which improves the quality of work in return. It is an undeniable fact that the working hours have decreased over time and continue to get lower. People used to work between 14-16 hours a day, 6 days a week during the Industrial Revolution. Now social welfare countries like Norway, Denmark, Germany, Netherlands share the first places as the least average working hours by 28 hours per week. Countries such as Japan, New Zealand, Ireland, and Scotland have already taken a revolutionary approach and adopted a four-day workweek. The trend shows that this will get lower (e.g., three working days in a week) in the course of time.

One can dream of a life where he or she gets 500$ as UBI and earns 1200$ dollar for 4 hours of work per day (~15$ per hour) during the weekdays. He or she neither abandons working nor works too much to have a negative effect on his or her life, personality, or relationships. Having a total of 1700$ per month is arguably enough (depending on where one lives) to live a healthy life with plenty of time for themselves, hobbies, and their family - of course, regarding this minimalist lifestyle choice. Others, who I assume would be the majority, would definitely not decrease their current working hours. Jones and Marinescu (2018) wrote that unconditional payments to Alaskan residents had no distinguishable effect on full-time employment levels (positive or negative), while part-time employment grew by roughly 17%. The reasons why people would not decrease their working hours would differ. Some of the possible scenarios are: (1) they value money over their leisure time hobbies, (2) they simply enjoy working more than anything else, (3) they are obliged to earn more to take care of people around them, and so forth.

While praising "leisure," Bertrand Russell made a slight difference between the types of leisure: Active and Passive. People usually take part in passive activities because they work so much and get tired. If they were not working for 8/10/12 hours per day, they would be involved in more active activities. At the end of the essay, he mentioned that our extreme effort does not suit the spirit of the time. Now we have machines that can work for us. Thus, there is no need to work as we were used to doing.

When Russell identified the necessity of a type of basic income in the early 20th century, the level of technological progress and the functionality of machines were not even close to the modern-day. Thus, this fact brings more justifiability to UBI. Considering the fact that around 33% of the world's food is lost or wasted every year (FAO, 2011), we might have reached a position where the equal and just distribution of the resources is far more important than producing them.

### 3.5 Michel Foucault, Negative Income Tax, Power, Anarchism, and UBI

My initial guess prior to research about the standpoint of Foucault on UBI was negative in terms of supporting UBI. I thought that his "Power and Subject" concepts seemed relevant to UBI - State is the "power," and UBI recipients are "subjects." If UBI is implemented, there will be another state institution that dominates us. I have already encountered criticism like "UBI will not give us freedom; instead, it will take away freedom." I thought this is how a Foucauldian approach

would evaluate UBI. The institution that will pay UBI to the citizens must certainly serve the hands of the power in some ways. In Western history, states have always played the role of security - protecting their citizens' rights. However, with the implementation of UBI, the relationship between power and citizens will radically change because now power will directly feed all citizens. Therefore, I have started to question that on the way to being liberal welfare states through UBI, is it possible that governments will turn into unexpected authoritarian regimes?

A social policy aimed at even a relative equalization, even a relative leveling out, according to Foucault, can only be anti-economic. The goal of social policy cannot be equality.

> "Social transfers are of a very limited character. Broadly speaking it is not a matter of maintaining purchasing power but merely of ensuring a vital minimum for those who, either permanently or temporarily, would not be able to ensure their own existence." (Foucault, 1979a)

UBI is not a social transfer. Social transfers' benefactors can be community donors, NGOs alongside the central government. UBI, as a right of the citizens, is given by only the government - a responsible body of the safety net. I believe that for this exact reason, Foucault evaluated UBI over other transfer programs.

Milner (2016) and Touren (2016) argued that Michel Foucault supported UBI. Milner wrote that Foucault supported UBI in the sense that UBI would free people from state intrusion. Foucault (1979b) wrote that it does not and should not bother us to know why people descend below the layer of the social game; whether they are a drug addict or willfully unemployed is irrelevant. He continues by saying that we must care about the actual problem and the solution, and those who support "negative income tax" claim that we have to provide social assistance to meet the basic needs of people. Foucault wrote that this type of income would raise people again to the level of the threshold and motivate them to live and to work. In case they don't desire to work and rise above the threshold, this is not a problem since it is their rightful lifestyle choice, and they should be kept assisted with the minimum guaranteed income. We can conclude that "unconditionality" is one of the primary features of UBI that Foucault was in favor of. I believe that Foucault must be satisfied with Milton Friedman's defense on the negative income tax.

Berend (2005) summarizes Foucault's solution for unemployment, poverty, and crimes. Foucault proposes a solution of social security together with individual autonomy. UBI fits these two concepts.

However, even though my guess on the standpoint of Foucault was wrong, I have found another contemporary philosopher who shares a similar view. Kunkler (2018) mentioned that according to Slavoj Zizek, UBI puts us in a position of "children of the state," making us more and more dependent on the state. This can be interpreted that UBI will strengthen the government's paternalism, and UBI is a type of pocket money. However, Matusov (2020) emphasizes that UBI is not paternalistic because it is given regardless of any requirement. If there was a condition, that would make UBI truly paternalistic. Unfortunately, the source video that Kunkler referred to was removed from Youtube, and I could not verify the statement. I will be elaborating on the opinions of Slavoj Zizek in one of the later paragraphs. The "state is getting powerful" argument is also defended by anarchists.

### 3.6 John Rawls, Theory of Justice, Inequality, and UBI

> "Thus it may be said that distribution should indeed be more equal if this is essential for meeting the basic needs of those less favored and only diminishes the enjoyments and pleasures of those better off" (Rawls, 1999a)

In the Theory of Justice, originally published in 1971, John Rawls wrote a thought experiment called "Original Position" about a hypothetical case of perfect equality. Let us suppose that you are going to build a new society from the very beginning. You should design the best society possible as you can. The "trick" in the experiment is that you never know your position in this new society. In the theory of John Rawls, the principles of justice are established behind "a veil of ignorance." He thought of justice as fairness. The main point of John Rawls is that in a situation where people are choosing "the perfect equality/justice," they should have the absence of self-interest to make the best decision for everyone. As long as one is not a gambler, he or she will most likely choose a society where he or she can live happily and safely at every possible outcome.

As Moore and Loewenstein (2004) pointed out, self-interest is instinctive, viscerally powerful, and frequently unconscious. To make a better decision, one needs more time and effort to think. People who think more about a hypothetical case of perfect equality without the urge of self-interest will tend to be fairer.

Today, a middle or upper-class person who does not need UBI may ignore the concept. However, if the same person were asked to build a new just society without knowing his or her position, he or she would not be too reckless about UBI as he or she was before the experiment. Here we observe a behavioral transformation in the approach to UBI and justice in general. The individual's self-interest (starting to consider UBI in the next unknown society) may also play a role in these circumstances. A Turkish proverb, "bana dokunmayan yılan bin yıl yaşasın,"[6] is a significant sociological and psychological analysis related to the example. When the snake starts biting, that is another case to evaluate.

Immanuel Kant also mentions careful thinking when it comes to moral decisions. Kant is a philosopher who advocates for a particularly severe view of the role of emotions in moral life (Rohlf, 2013; Warburton, 2011). For Immanuel Kant, one should decide what is moral and immoral based on the principles of "kategorischer Imperativ"[7]. From a Kantian perspective, if anyone supports Universal Basic Income as they feel pity or sadness for poor people, this is not an ethical standpoint. The proper ethical standpoint should not derive from emotion but a rational mind and the responsibility of duties.

In the "utopian" world of John Rawls, Universal Basic Income can be one element out of many options to restore justice. If nobody knows their position in the new society, many people, far more than the current number, would be interested in supporting UBI. The feeling of guaranteed basic income and secure life in the hypothetical world would attract many people who do not know what will happen next. However, it is fair to assume that this decision-making and rationalization process does not occur in real-life scenarios.

Another aspect of Rawlsian theory and UBI is that Rawls argued for the well-being of the worst-off group. UBI is for everyone, but UBI is crucial for people in the least advantaged positions in society. Thus, UBI is a suitable policy for the Rawlsian theory of improvement of the condition of

[6] Literal translation: a snake that does not touch me may live a thousand years. In this particular saying, a snake is a metaphor for the concept of "danger" or "problem" and is not related to any type of animal cruelty.
[7] Categorical Imperative

the worst-off group. Rawls (1999b) determined that inequality in the economic difference due to natural talents and abilities can be allowed as long as the worst-off group is in fair conditions and benefits from this situation to some degree. The Difference Principle of John Rawls allows inequalities in wealth and income.

As Van Parijs (2009) clarifies, John Rawls disagreed that UBI is justified. The statement of "those who surf all day off Malibu must find a way to support themselves and would not be entitled to public funds" by John Rawls in 1988 was anti-UBI. Nobel-prize-winning economist Phelps (2000) explained that Rawlsian Justice is entitled to only those competent and willing to participate and contribute at least a portion of the economy's pie. In response to Rawls's "Malibu surfers" statement, Van Parijs defended the rights of every person to get unconditional and guaranteed basic income in his famous "Why Surfers Should Be Fed" essay. Van Parijs (1991) concluded that liberal justice entitles them to sufficient income.

Van Dijk (2016) analyzed the justification of UBI in terms of Rawlsian "self-respect." He concluded that unconditional basic income is better for keeping the beneficiaries' self-esteem higher than conditional basic income. Because in the case of UBI, people will not have to reveal that they have lesser means and need benefits publicly. In terms of self-respect, it is better to get an income that everybody gets.

### 3.7 Robert Nozick, Distributive Justice, State, and UBI

In 1973, Nozick published a journal article called "Distributive Justice". This paper criticized "A Theory of Justice" by John Rawls. Nozick disagreed with Rawls's "justice as fairness" and he introduced "justice in holdings" - Entitlement Theory.

I found UBI related to Entitlement Theory. UBI does not promise a redistribution of wealth, and UBI does not prevent people from earning unequal amounts for doing the same type of job. Nozick dismissed the idea of “redistribution” because there is no central power to redistribute wealth and it is not morally justified. Unlike John Rawls, he did not support distributive justice via taxes or other alternatives.

However, the conflicting side of Nozick's views with UBI is the state intervention. In "Anarchy, State, and Utopia," Nozick (1974) advocated “a night-watchman state” - a limited and

minimal state model. In UBI, the state plays an important role and maybe increases its actual power. UBI is also becoming an influential tool for election campaigns. Gentilini et al. (2020) remind that in the 2008 elections of Mongolia, political parties competed over the guarantee of cash transfers for the citizens. Andrew Yang, in the United States of America, is promising UBI in the elections. What if an opposition always promises more amount of basic income than the government? In an ideal situation, UBI does not necessarily have to be under the control of the state. It would be a far better decision to establish a free and independent institution of UBI. An independent institution of UBI must be beyond any political party and government. There are some similar institutions like the Supreme Court or Constitutional Court. Notable economists like Thorstein Veblen, Douglass North, Daron Acemoglu pointed out the importance and necessity of excellent and working institutions on the progress and performance of the economy and welfare. Nevertheless, the state budget is the only resource that can afford UBI. If the state (e.g., Department of Treasury) is funding UBI, then how can UBI be run as an independent institution?

Kaza (2018) suspects that Robert Nozick would have condemned the UBI as an "illegitimate state acquisition of property." Therefore, those who share a similar political view to Nozick will not support UBI like Van Parijs and Vanderborght propose.[8] Raventos (2007) also argues that for Nozick, any type of equality that breaches individual property rights can not be justified.

Duignan (2021) remarks that Nozick was against the power of states in terms of controlling prices or setting a minimum wage. For Nozick, this intervention is against the natural rights of citizens. The state also should not impose education or health programs funded by taxes; this is also a violation of the natural rights of citizens. Since UBI is mainly discussed to be funded by taxes, we can conclude that UBI is not a policy that Nozick would approve.

### 3.8 Noam Chomsky, Anarchism, and UBI

Noam Chomsky has expressed that UBI is compatible with human rights; therefore, it can be justified (Chomsky's Philosophy, 2017). Nevertheless, he has assessed UBI as a "short-time solution"

[8] In reference to their latest book - “Basic Income: A Radical Proposal for a Free Society and a Sane Economy.”

to reduce significant problems. However, many sources include the name of Noam Chomsky in the line of UBI advocates.

Chomsky said that Milton Friedman defended UBI because he wanted to get rid of entire welfare programs and simply replace it with UBI (Ramin Zareian, 2019). However, Chomsky does not agree that UBI alone can provide what people actually demand, because not every person has identical needs. Some people require special care. Noam Chomsky thinks that UBI can work if the government keeps the other social welfare programs.

Chomsky is an envisioner of an anarcho-syndicalist future where the wage system will be abolished. The reason is that depending on a wage is slavery. I am unsure how anarcho-syndicalists evaluate UBI since it can be interpreted as an existence wage paid by the state to the citizens. Is it hush money or a positive element in the evolution towards a better future? All I can proclaim is that general anarcho-syndicalist views do not match the idea of UBI.

Besides the awful things that states do, Chomsky wrote that creating a welfare system is one of the good sides of the states.

> “As a result of centuries of extensive popular struggle, there is a minimal welfare system that provides support for poor mothers and children. That's under attack in an effort to minimize the state. Well, anarchists can't seem to understand that they are to support that. So they join with the ultra-right in saying "Yes, we've got to minimize the state," meaning put more power into the hands of private tyrannies which are completely unaccountable to the public and purely totalitarian.” (Chomsky, 2005)

Yet, if we look at the word choice “minimal”, it is clear that the welfare systems are not excellent, and there is plenty of room for improvement. He also highlights anarchists should not attack the welfare systems as they are against the state.

UBI has some common bonds with the idea of anarchism. Flanigan (2019) considers that anarchists should defend basic income policies that indemnify people whose rights are disregarded by officials' enforcement of conventional property rules. The importance of individual liberty plays a crucial role in both UBI and anarchism.

However, in theory, anarchists must be against any social welfare programs run by the state because they support the abolition of the state in the first place. With the anarchist approach, if the state is abolished, we will not need social welfare programs anyway. The problem would be solved from the root for anarchists. In addition, the UBI system causes an inevitable hierarchy between provider and receiver, and hierarchy is strictly contradicted to every form of anarchist philosophy.

Furthermore, Williams (2012) argues that anarchists do not consider increasing incomes to eradicate inequality an appropriate solution. We can call UBI a program that intends to increase the income of people, especially the worst-off group. For William, instead of increasing incomes, anarchists have essential principles like autonomy, mutual help, solidarity, anti-authoritarianism, self-management, and others may give the means to achieve justice and freedom.

### 3.9 Slavoj Žižek, Automation, Advanced Capitalism, and UBI

In many parts, I have tried to make a connection between UBI and the works of philosophers. However, Slavoj Žižek is a living philosopher who can share his ideas in the Youtube Era. Fortunately, we have a dedicated video interview on Žižek's views on the idea of UBI. Slavoj Žižek, when he was asked about his opinion on UBI, says that in a rationally organized society, we should perceive the news about automation and robotization as good news. It should make us happier as it means less work and more leisure for humans (The Radical Revolution, 2020). However, he continues that we do not react in this way (since we are not living in such a society), and we are scared of this progress in technology. Slavoj Žižek makes it clear that he is, in principle, a UBI supporter, yet he does not consider UBI as the solution. UBI, in his opinion, is a more intelligent and efficient type of capitalism. Since Slavoj Žižek identifies himself as a communist, it is understandable why the "type of capitalism" is not good enough to be the final solution for him. Even though he expressed his potential lack of information on the topic before his speech, he is familiar with the works of Philippe Van Parijs, whom he called "The Father of UBI."

Moreover, Žižek does not consider laziness (here, I think he refers to Bertrand Russell's "idleness") virtuous. He insists that people should do something and be engaged in any work. He is one of the people who associate work with personal dignity. Žižek has given one example of "cleaning the parks" as a job that is probably an unfortunate choice of example, and I have difficulty understanding its relationship with dignity. I cannot entirely agree with Slavoj Žižek on his insistence

on the necessity of work/working. Would not a robot that cleans any place faster and more efficiently be a better alternative in terms of dignity while the replaced worker is dealing with a nonrepetitive and more creative task that is one of the primary promises of UBI? I do not think that I am too futuristic in this topic because technology is almost here. In the summer of 2021, Elon Musk introduced a "Tesla Bot" - a robot that can perform daily tasks that are unsafe, repetitive, or boring. An upgraded version of "Tesla Bot" in a maximum of 3 or 4 years will probably be good enough to do daily cleaning, shopping, carrying stuff around, etc.

Furthermore, UBI does not necessarily mean that people will not do anything as Žižek is concerned. The main help of UBI will be giving people a choice about what they really want to do. If we sincerely accept that there is a category of jobs called "undesired", the question "who will do the undesired jobs?" is still relevant in UBI, like it is valid in communism. If UBI is higher or almost equal to the average cleaner's monthly salary, will a cleaner continue to do his or her job? Should we wait a couple of years to see the total domination of automation in the unskilled labor to move on to UBI implementations? Does it mean that UBI will be implemented only when it is a political necessity to keep the increasing number of unemployed citizens calm? These questions need to be heavily debated in the philosophy of UBI.

My last point about the value of work is that no work or job is inherently virtuous or undignified. The Milgram experiments showed us that some jobs could turn innocent people into dangerous executors by obeying the authority figure's instructions. I do not assume that Bertrand Russell, a pacifist, evaluated military-related jobs as virtuous as some folks do.

Žižek's comments on UBI and its relevance to capitalism is a valuable contribution to the topic, and it should create a cautionary effect. I have started to question, "is it possible that UBI is an evil idea that promises justice and equality but results in a bigger fraud"? Or put shortly, “is UBI a bait”?

Let us support that UBI is a poor solution to injustice and inequality. If this is true, then the increasing popularity and implementation of UBI is a threat and blockade for other proposals and ideologies that strive for “real” justice and equality.

To be fair, UBI is not a complex political ideology but a proposal to improve the overall welfare of people. Therefore, it would be a harsh criticism to call UBI "a bait." Moreover, UBI is just one version of how social welfare programs can be improved. I believe that UBI deserves careful

thinking and practical assessment. Likewise, Daemen (2021) highlights the importance of UBI experiments by claiming that UBI experiments are justified if their proposed benefits in terms of justice surpass their expected costs. He concludes that it would be a pity not to uncover whether or not basic income can practically deliver its theoretical promises of justice.

### 3.10 Peter Singer, Utilitarianism, Poverty, and UBI:

"Is it morally right to give people free money?" In terms of Utilitarianism, the answer is straightforward. Yes. Utilitarianism advocates the greatest happiness for the greatest number. Jeremy Bentham is the founder of this philosophical movement. In "The Principles of Morals and Legislation" (1789), he pointed out that the greatest happiness for the greatest number of people should be the main target of any social and political decision-making process (Buckingham, 2011). It is logical to assume that people with low and unstable incomes would appreciate and support welfare programs such as UBI more than those with high and stable incomes. This hypothesis has already been proved many times, and also by Laín (2020), who published a survey result from Spain that the majority of the poorest people support UBI. The survey demonstrated support from wealthy people towards UBI, however, non-surprisingly, at lower rates than the poor.

When the topic comes to the people with low and unstable incomes, it is obvious to claim them as "the greatest number" because the majority of the world population is poor. If a decision makes the poor (so the greatest number) happy, then it should be done, according to Utilitarianism. In the following paragraphs, you can see the facts that show "the greatest number" is, in fact, poor.

According to “Global Wealth Report 2021” (Credit Suisse, 2021), 1.1% of the adult population owns 45.8% of the global net worth. Castaneda Aguilar et al. (2021) published the estimated number of people in extreme poverty - earning less than $1.90 per day - is close to 700 thousand people. After COVID-19, the number of people in absolute poverty has undoubtedly increased. Around 100 million people were estimated to decline to extreme poverty levels after the pandemic (World Bank, 2020). The research also shows that more than 40% of the world’s population – almost 3.3 billion people – live below the $5.50 line.

Thus, it is safe to say that "the greatest happiness principle" would be relevant if the policymakers and politicians favored the utilitarian approach. Because at least 3.3 billion people earn

less than $5.50 per day, which is a meager amount, they definitely need a system to make them happier. Universal Basic Income can be the solution in this regard.

There is another common direction of Utilitarianism and UBI. Many people consider Utilitarianism as a "simple theory" because of its main principle: do whatever brings good consequences, maximizes happiness and well-being. Likewise, many people consider UBI a "simple policy," too. UBI stands as a simple alternative after many complicated attempts to improve social security systems, welfare programs, etc. As Annie Lowrey's book called: "Give People Money." Many UBI supporters argue that it is that simple. The findings suggest that people view the administrative simplicity of UBI as a critical asset, and those who place a high value on such simplicity are more likely to support it (Nettle et al., 2021b)

In 2019, Peter Singer, a contemporary utilitarian philosopher, shared a post in his official Facebook account about the positive results of the Finland UBI experiment on life satisfaction and mental health, referring to Scott Santens's article on "Medium."[9] This can be proof of support by Singer on UBI.

In the interview conducted by Altmann (2020), Singer invited people to donate to "GiveDirectly," a non-profit organization of unconditional cash transfers. The Basic income project in Kenya by GiveDirectly is very effective research for assessing the idea of UBI.

John Stuart Mill, as far as I understood, demonstrated sympathy for Fourierism in his work “Principles of Political Economy with some of their Applications to Social Philosophy” as his mention of Fourierism was more than a mere description of the idea. He (2004) wrote that in the most skilfully combined form of Socialism - Fourierism, a certain minimum is first allocated for the subsistence of every member of the community, whether competent or not of labour.

[9] https://www.facebook.com/364558240410075/posts/finlands-universal-basic-income-experiment-suggests-a-ubi-improves-life-satisfac/1034497593416133/

# CHAPTER 4: GENERAL DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In the fourth chapter of the thesis, I will present the general discussion and conclusion about the position of UBI in contemporary philosophy.

## 4.1 Conclusion of the Thesis

Universal Basic Income is a sociopolitical policy proposal. It is about giving enough cash to all people monthly to cover their basic life needs. The main characteristics of this cash transfer program are 1. Universal, 2. Unconditional, 3. Cash, 4. Individual, 5. Periodic. One of the many goals of UBI is to alleviate poverty. In the long run, it can also aim to replace other need-based social programs. There are numerous UBI pilot experiments around the globe with slightly different formats and criteria. Even though UBI has become a popular idea in the last decades, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, there are still uncertainties about what it really means. In this thesis, I have examined the position of UBI in the works of the most influential contemporary philosophers.

It is important to mention the history of UBI first. To solve the problem of inequality and crime punishments, Thomas More suggested a form of universal allocation system in his famous “Utopia” work. He wrote that providing everyone with "means of livelihood" would be an effective approach. Thomas Paine and Thomas Spence, in 1797, wrote important books about the idea of UBI. For Thomas Paine, creating a national fund funded by taxes and providing a “stakeholder grant” would be the best method to alleviate man-made poverty. Thomas Spence argued for a system where surplus income from the rental incomes would be distributed equally among all members of parishes - those who are given land ownership to govern. Joseph Charlier defended "a guaranteed minimum” in which a "territorial dividend" is paid to all citizens monthly, and this is the most similar version to the modern UBI.

I have taken the concept of “boredom” from Arthur Schopenhauer. For Schopenhauer, boredom and pain are unavoidable parts of human suffering. Boredom can also derive from too much work. Surveys show that many adults experience boredom because of adult responsibilities. He makes a difference about boredom and pain by saying that wealthy people are bored, and the poor working-

class experience pain. UBI can help those who experience pain from the point of economic disadvantages - having no shelter or being hungry. Furthermore, wealthy people can have plenty of time for reading and improving themselves in general, while the poor have no such “luxury”. I have argued that Schopenhauer would support UBI in terms of having the opportunity to self-improvement and engage in arts. On the other hand, Schopenhauer wrote that leisure time is strange for human nature. Many people would feel bored and useless if they are not working unless they possess a great intellect which would always keep them busy and curious about many things in life.

UBI is relevant to the Alienation Theory of Karl Marx. With the help of UBI, workers will have a chance to choose a suitable job for themselves, and they will not be dependent on their undesired job. This will create an effect of personal attachment to their works, and they will be no longer alien to their products. It is known that UBI increases motivation and job performance. Moreover, UBI will bring a higher bargaining power to the employees. Nonetheless, none of these will abolish the fact that people will sell their labours to the capitalist and the surplus value will remain a huge problem. For these exact reasons, UBI is not an ideal solution for the Marxist philosophy and economy.

William James’s Pragmatism is suitable with the UBI in the sense that UBI can be evaluated as a pragmatic solution for poverty. The concept of “truth” in the Pragmatism of William James depends on the utility of the idea. UBI supporters believe that UBI is a good choice for fighting poverty and for those who will most certainly lose their jobs over the next 10 years due to AI, automation, or overall technological improvements.

Bertrand Russell is one of the biggest supporters of UBI without dispute. He wrote about the importance of “vagabond's wage” - a similar concept to UBI in his book "Roads to Freedom". He advocated the opinion that everybody must receive a minimum income to meet their basic needs regardless of working. He highlighted the fact that a vagabond's wage is not high enough to live a luxurious life, but sufficient to live a minimalist life. In addition, Russell also pointed out the importance of leisure and idleness. He wrote that working for 4 hours would establish a better society. In 1935, he wrote that “Now we have machines that can work for us”. Almost 90 years later, we have reached an incomparable level of technological advance, and yet, we have around the same working hours.

Michel Foucault demonstrated sympathy for the concept of negative income tax, thus, to the concept of giving people some amount of cash to fulfill their basic needs without an obligation of work or other services. By doing so, people who were below the threshold of the social game can rise to the level threshold or even further if they are motivated enough. Basically, this is an attempt to create equal opportunities for people.

John Rawls's "Theory of Justice" was one of the main inspirations for me to write this thesis. The concept of "Original Position" is one of the logical and empathic reasons why everyone should support UBI. For John Rawls, inequality can be allowed as long as the worst-off group is in fair conditions and benefits from this situation to some degree. UBI could improve the welfare of the worst-off groups of the societies. However, John Rawls did not support the fact that people such as surfers in Malibu deserve a basic income without doing or contributing anything to society. This has been a topic of a famous debate between John Rawls and Van Parijs.

Robert Nozick dismissed the idea of "redistribution". He did not support distributive justice via taxes or other alternatives; therefore, he would not support UBI programmes funded by taxes. Moreover, Nozick was against state intervention for controlling prices or setting a minimum wage. He argued for "a night-watchman state" - a minimal interfering state. It is debatable whether or not UBI would minimize the intervention of the state. I said it is debatable because one can also argue that UBI will reduce the number of other complex welfare programmes and bureaucratic procedures.

Noam Chomsky does not agree that UBI, by replacing the whole social welfare system, can provide what people actually demand as not every person has the same exact needs. He has evaluated UBI as a "short-time solution" to reduce significant problems. He also wrote that welfare systems are not something to be against or attacked for the sake of anarchist activism against the governments. However, anarchism rejects any type of institution and prefers principles like autonomy, mutual help, solidarity, anti-authoritarianism, self-management, etc.

Slavoj Žižek said that he is, in principle, a UBI supporter, however, he does not see UBI as the solution. For Žižek, UBI is a more intelligent and efficient type of capitalism. He insists that people should be engaged in any work as a part of personal dignity. Žižek's comment on the UBI is very valuable in terms of not believing or supporting one policy/ideology/opinion blindfolded.
[76]

Peter Singer and other many utilitarian philosophers such as Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill support the idea of UBI in terms of the “greatest happiness for the greatest number” principle. Jeremy Bentham believed that this principle should be the chief target of any social and political decision-making process. Singer hasn’t talked or wrote directly about UBI much, however, his few social media shares prove that he cares about the idea of UBI.

Non-surprisingly, there is no consensus about UBI and UBI-like programs among contemporary philosophers. Some of them argue that it is good for society, and others believe that it is not the best solution, and not too worthy of attention. Noam Chomsky and Slavoj Žižek shared similar views by not accepting UBI as the long-term solution. Bertrand Russell and Michel Foucault supported that everyone must get a no-strings-attached minimum income to cover their basic needs. Schopenhauer never commented about UBI or a similar concept, but his emphasis on boredom is a valuable material to assess leisure, work, happiness notions that UBI is strictly connected. Karl Marx would mainly agree with Slavoj Žižek that UBI is a product of advanced capitalism. Neither of John Rawls or Robert Nozick advocated a basic income in which people will earn cash without showing any competence and contribution to the society. William James and utilitarian philosophers believe that the utility of any idea is the most important of all. They do not directly support UBI in terms of being public advocators, however, their philosophical approach is very suitable with the idea of UBI.

It will take some time for a fully developed UBI policy proposal. This will require successful experiments around the globe, economic and social research regarding the observed effects from those experiments, political discussions about poverty, employment, welfare system, artificial intelligence, and the topic of this thesis: philosophizing about UBI to explore more about ethics, human nature, and life in general.

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