DEPRIVATION AND DESERVINGNESS:

EXPLORING BASIC INCOME IN RESPONSE TO IMMIGRANT POVERTY

by

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A Major Research Paper

presented to Ryerson University

in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of

Master of Arts

In the Program of

Immigration and Settlement Studies

Toronto, Ontario, Canada, 2016

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ABSTRACT

Research on the economic trends for immigrants to Canada shows a progressive trend towards impoverishment, particularly for racialized groups. This review presents the case that current responses to poverty in Canada are inadequate, and tend to perpetuate the cycles they seek to address by reifying group divides. Building on theories of social exclusion, this MRP explores the potential of basic income to create greater access to social and material capital for otherwise marginalized groups. Finally, by looking at current policy approaches to welfare, public attitudes towards redistribution, and historic BIG trials, the argument is made that with non-moral framing a basic income trial in Canada could be both politically feasible and destigmatizing.

Key words:

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Introduction

Poverty is about more than money - it is symbolic of greater systems of power, and reflects patterns of deprivation, and perceptions of deservingness. Lacking the social capital (i.e. networks and connections) to access resources in society can present a huge obstacle for any individual. Increasingly, research shows that this social stumbling block is particularly present in the experiences of immigrants, especially those arriving in recent decades. Canada's current approach to poverty includes a patchwork of means-tested social assistance programs which themselves perpetuate the very stigmatizing power structures they exist to address. As a response to this, I explore the notion that a model of basic (unconditional) income has the potential to address newcomer poverty in a meaningful and emancipatory way. Beyond an economic plan, this concept of basic income represents a radical social innovation with the potential to bring members of society in from the margins. In addition, because this assistance would apply equally to all citizens below a certain income threshold, it has the potential to bypass "othering" effects associated with programs which target specific populations.

There are many standpoints from which to approach the problem of newcomer poverty in Canada. This research will explore whether basic income has the potential to provide a destigmatizing response to immigrant poverty. If basic income holds the possibility of a justice-oriented response to the growing divide between rich and poor in Canada (and the increasing income gap between *native born* and *new* Canadians) then I consider it an idea worth exploring.

I.   **Background: Economic trends for Canadian immigrants**

In the past two decades Canada's immigrant intake policies have shifted dramatically away from humanitarian intake towards an entry system which is largely driven by economics.

The post 1990 period saw significant shifts in the proportional intake of categories of migrants: before the 1990's family class migrants accounted for 60% of total newcomer intake, post 2000 the same group accounted for only 27% of total intake, while the economic class now represented 60% of all intake (Wilkinson, 2013). Today, economic immigrants account for more than half of all new permanent residents (Adamuti-Trache, 190).

For highly skilled migrants entering through these new streams, this has largely led to underemployment, occupational mismatch, and devaluation of human capital. In Canada, immigrants are now (on average) more highly educated than native-born Canadians. And yet, despite this attempt engineer immigration according to the Canadian labour market, the percentage of Canadians living in poverty has risen more rapidly post 1990 than in any other Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) country (Lightman and Gingrich, 125). Poverty is a pervasive issue impacting a huge section of Canadian society, as a social group only Indigenous peoples are more widely impacted by poverty than new immigrants. Data collected by Statistics Canada shows that in 2010, the rate of poverty among new immigrants was 17.6% -almost twice the overall poverty rate for Canada. The same report found that male immigrants earn 63 cents to every dollar earned by Canadian-born men and women (National Household Survey, 2005). In some reports, these figures are even starker. Block's analysis of 2006 (pre-recession) census data show that racialized women earn a staggering 55.6% of what non-racialized men take in, and are 48% more likely to be unemployed than their non-racialized male counterparts (Block, 4). These trends are troubling considering racialized Canadians are among the fastest growing groups in the country.

The racialization of poverty

Adding to a wide body of literature on the racialization of poverty, Lightman and Gingrich identify race as a key determinant in Canadian labour market outcomes. Visible minority immigrants, they find, receive the lowest returns of any group when it comes to education and work experience, as well as unionization. In combination with other identity dynamics (particularly, age and gender), young, racialized women are found to be most vulnerable to this process of labour market exclusion (138). These findings are consistent with an ever-growing body of literature pertaining to immigrant economic trends. This theory of social exclusion is helpful in deconstructing the various factors at play in immigrant economic outcomes.

These findings point to a looming problem regarding poverty in Canada – the persistent and disproportionate exposure to poverty plaguing minority communities has come to be dubbed "the racialization of poverty". This racialization of poverty stems from unequal access to social, economic, and political power for racialized (often immigrant) communities. This experience of prolonged powerlessness can be corrosive for a community as it leads to: "voicelessness, vulnerability, insecurity, and an inability to participate fully in society or develop a sense of belonging and national or community identity" (Galabuzi, 12). The experience of poverty can be damaging for any community, but for newcomers the impact may be intensified, creating a stratified sense of belonging and preventing outward mobility.

This intersection of immigrant status with low income status may serve to heighten experiences of social exclusion which either group may be prone to. Such processes of social exclusion may represent "dysfunctional integration" that may prove "difficult to reverse in the

long-run" (Galabuzi, 14). This process of racialization may be reproduced inter-generationally in a way which accentuates historical patterns of racial discrimination and perpetuates economic marginalization and income disparity (Block, 15). There is a huge body of literature which demonstrates that immigrants –especially racialized immigrants- face remarkably different labour market outcomes. In addition to systemic discrimination, labour market shifts in recent years have led to a growing precarity of work. As a result, temporary, low-wage, limited security jobs have become the norm in sectors where immigrants are disproportionately represented (Block, 17). This pattern of racialized poverty not only creates material disadvantage for a huge segment of society, but it undermines the legitimacy of multiculturalism as offering equal access to opportunities for all Canadians.

In some regions, this issue is more pressing. In Ontario 28.8% of recent immigrants (as of 2012) were living in poverty, and 19.1% of immigrants were still in poverty after 10 years in Canada (Segal, 2012). As Lightman and Gingrich note, with changes to the Immigration Act and the introduction of the points system in 1976 the proportion of visible minorities quickly amounted to a compositional shift the Canadian cultural makeup: during the 1960's only about 10% of all immigrants to Canada were visible minorities, whereas by 2009 more than 50% of all immigrants identified as being visible minorities (Lightman and Gingrich, 128).

It should be noted that the majority of studies on the immigrant wage gap have taken a cross-sectional approach to examine the economic outcomes of new immigrants as compared with the native born population, accounting for the initial drop in earnings while examining the ability of immigrant earnings to catch-up over time (Banerjee, 467). Banerjee critiques this methodology, noting that in the cross-sectional approach earning patterns for recent immigrants are often projected based on patterns of previous cohorts, which have become significantly more

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diverse in the past few decades. For this reason she states that a longitudinal approach can more accurately compare the income growth of native born workers with recent immigrants over time. With more accurate (longitudinal) comparative data, new insight into the intersections between recent immigrant status, race, and earning progression would be gained (467). Based on a longitudinal analysis of immigrant earning patterns, Banerjee observes that visible minorities often do not enjoy the economic "catch-up" and that, rather, native-born earnings tend to stagnate with age which produces an apparent convergence in earnings (468).

Economic adaptation strategies

By now it is well established that over-qualification and underemployment is a huge barrier facing Canada's newcomer population. In order to survive in their new country, immigrants must often adopt economic coping strategies. In an effort to illuminate the complexities of immigrant poverty, this section will introduce three key economic coping strategies including: immigrant self-employment, survival jobs, and transnational working arrangements. As evidenced by Sarah Wayland, immigrants are slightly more likely to be self-employed than the native born population. One of the explanations for this self-employment is in reaction to challenges integrating in the labour market, particularly: failures of foreign credential recognition, lack of social capital, and discrimination. While self-employment does grant greater autonomy and creativity to the individual, entrepreneurship comes with its own challenges including: uncertainty, long hours, and lack of benefits (Wayland, 130). While entrepreneurship is generally perceived as something positive, self-employment as a last resort should be viewed with a critical lens. Even once immigrants make the decision to self-employ their labour market integration is often still limited by factors including: language capacity, discrimination, lack of knowledge regarding cultural norms, and limited access to capital (Wayland, 130).

Another common adaptation strategy is (so-called) "survival employment" which is broadly understood as low-wage, low-skilled, precarious work taken out of necessity or desperation. One study by Creese and Weber finds that nearly three quarters of immigrants interviewed reported experiencing downward mobility which involved working in a job requiring fewer skills, lower wages, or less prestige than jobs held in home country (64). This experience is all too common and creates a cycle of downward social mobility which impacts the family at a range of levels, including economically and psychologically. Underemployment of this kind is a cyclical process whereby the individual gradually becomes less connected to their previous field of expertise, human capital declines, and ability to move out of the deskilled role decreases. In this way, what starts out as a temporary "survival job" can easily entrap immigrants who are struggling to meet basic needs, are unable to secure employment which might be more meaningful (65).

Another labour market coping mechanism which some families turn to is a transnational working arrangement involving remittances. One of the most extreme examples of this is the "astronaut family" phenomenon which is particularly common among the Hong Kong diaspora in Canada. This is a process through which families are drawn to Canada by policies attracting affluent, highly-skilled migrants, but upon arrival individuals are met with great barriers to economic integration. As a reaction, one or both primary earners are compelled to return to the home country (in this case: Hong Kong) for employment. From the home county they send remittances to remaining family members in Canada (Kobayashi, 152). This often leads to the prolonged separation of spouses and creates a situation of transnational parenting.

While this strategy may be economically adaptive, it presents huge challenges to the integration and overall health and wellbeing of the family. As Kobayashi describes, this situation

is coloured by the sad irony that families are compelled to migrate in the interest of providing better opportunities for their children, but in the process the family unit is stressed and separated (152).

Social dimensions of poverty

It goes without saying that poverty has a multidimensional impact. Living with scarcity affects the decision-making ability and material reality of every individual involved. For immigrant families with limited social networks or knowledge of cultural norms, poverty can have an even more profound impact on the social and structural reality. Two key areas of impact are *housing* and *health*. In terms of housing, there is an important connection between housing and identity: "the amount a household chooses, or is able to spend on housing partially determines their access to amenities, the quality of their surroundings and the people they come into contact with" (Haan, 12). Thus, the percentage of household income which immigrant families can afford to spend on housing will directly impact their level of integration with the broader society, and will serve as a good indicator of their social and economic position in the Canadian context. In this sense finding housing is more than just a fulfilling basic need for shelter, rather, housing decisions set the tone for an immigrant experience in Canada. Newcomer families with limited means will be forced to accept substandard or overcrowded housing.

In this way, poverty also has a spatial dimension in that it minimizes outward mobility and can perpetuate isolation, segregation and even ghettoization (Harell, 2). Haan proposes looking at the issue of immigrant residential overcrowding as an indicator of economic constraint. As per the 2006 census, it was found that immigrants had a 1 in 14 chance of living in an overcrowded situation, as compared to a 1 in 60 chance for the Canadian-born population

(Haan, 16). This overcrowding is also known as "hidden homelessness", which is found to be an increasingly common occurrence among newcomer families, particularly in the major immigrant-receiving cities (Montreal, Toronto, and Vancouver) and their surrounding areas. Hidden homelessness as a social issue is difficult to study or remedy as it involves an invisible population, but it points to a problem of the inaccessibility of a most basic need for those living in poverty. The impacts associated with hidden homelessness include: diminished productivity, negatively affected academic performance in children, and mental/physical health issues related to stress (Haan, 18).

The connection between immigration and health is another key area where poverty intersects with immigrant status and may intensify the outcome. Beiser attempts to explain the (so-called) "healthy immigrant effect" which describes the decline in health observed in most immigrants within a decade of coming to Canada. He makes a connection between immigrant poverty and reduced health by proposing a "resettlement stress paradigm" (35). This model takes into account the negative impacts of stresses (such as unemployment, poverty, and lack of access to services) that may adversely affect *any* individual, but also factors in the increased probability of experiencing these stresses during the process of immigration and resettlement. As Beiser notes, during their first decade in Canada immigrants are (roughly three times) more likely than their native-born counterparts to experience poverty (35). In addition to increasing exposure to risk factors for disease, poverty tends to compromise access to health services such a prevention, screening, and treatment programs (35).

These examples of economic adaptation strategies and social outcomes for impoverished immigrants are just a snapshot of the larger issue of poverty in Canada. These examples serve to highlight a glaring problem with the way that Canadian immigration policy attracts and abandons

new immigrants. There is no shortage of literature relating to economic outcomes of new immigrants, and there are equally as many recommendations put forth in response: calls for immigration policy reforms, increased foreign qualification recognition, and better settlement service provision are just a few of the proposed policy remedies. It should be noted that government and business programs have begun to emerge in response to the formidable labour market barriers faced by immigrants. These range from agencies offering credential assessments, mentorship opportunities connecting newcomers to professionals in their field, and bridging programs which provide Canadian work experience. Some of these programs have shown initial success, although the funding and availability of these programs is inconsistent (Reitz, n.p.)

As the issue of newcomer un(der)employment continues to grow, it is likely that the response will require a multi-level approach which incorporates all of these initiatives; but new ideas are also clearly needed. These solutions speak to the economic situation of immigrants, but do little to address the dynamics which sustain these processes of social exclusion. Treating the issue of immigrant poverty as merely an economic problem is to treat a symptom rather than an illness. The ongoing trends of devaluation and discrimination which entrap newcomers in cycles of unemployment and poverty will not be adequately addressed by any single economic program or social payout.

This said, social reform founded on the right of all residents to enjoy a certain standard of living (by providing a standard of income) may provide a starting point. Basic income is rooted in the emancipatory potential of providing residents with sufficient means to meet their basic needs. This differs from current social assistance in that the benefits provided would be *universal* and *unconditional*. This model has the potential to distance social assistance from heavy

stigmatization which arises from granting benefits based on means-testing and administrational discretion.

Scarcity mindset

Another way of looking at poverty is its impact on daily decision-making. Guy Standing (co-founder of the Basic Income Earth Network) introduces the concept of a "scarcity mindset" present in those living with prolonged poverty. This mindset is characterized by heightened anxiety, shortened planning horizons, and narrowed perceptions. As Standing describes it:

> Scarcity also colonises the mind. It weakens the will, which helps perpetuate the scarcity, because people cannot psychologically prepare to take initiatives or entrepreneurial risks. This helps to explain the failure of many well intentioned schemes to assist the income poor; the intended recipients cannot sustain the effort or will-power to take advantage of them.
>
> Standing, 197

As evidenced in a study of Indian farmers, this scarcity mindset has a direct, measurable effect on cognitive capacity. Results of this study showed that in a pre-harvest period where money is scarce, farmers performed worse on a standard intelligence test – the impairment in this case is likened to the effects of a night without sleep (197). Building on these results, Standing makes the case that if *scarcity* produces a measurable shortfall in cognitive capacity, then income *security* must have the opposite effect. More directly: if monetary constraints promote short-term risk-averse choices, then monetary security must promote more long-term, entrepreneurial behaviour (197).

Understood in these terms, income security (which basic income has the potential to provide) represents an avenue for mental and material liberation. This model may also be used to counter concerns that granting basic income without work requirements would result in a lazy or unproductive society. Surely there would be those who used the income to maximize on leisure time, but there would be others empowered by the income security who would use the funds to innovate, or take entrepreneurial risks.

While the scarcity mindset model may be somewhat reductive – painting a picture of those in poverty as lacking agency- it may be useful in understanding the cyclical nature of poverty. If we can entertain the existence of a scarcity mindset, it is reasonable to assume that mitigating income insecurity through a basic income scheme would result in more entrepreneurial risk taking, as well as increased ability to cope should the venture be unsuccessful. This potential to foster innovation and risk-taking represents a key advantage of basic income from both a social and business perspective. By decreasing vulnerability associated with income instability, basic income would also contribute to greater resilience of individuals, families, and communities by decreasing the destabilizing impact of scarcity. Ideally, basic income would create space for individuals to use their time more creatively; to engage in non-renumerated activities more often, to be bolder in business, and to contribute more freely to their communities.

II.   Theoretical frameworks

Because poverty is so intricately linked with politics of identity, it is helpful to look at theories of power and exclusion to inform potential policy responses. Lightman and Gingrich offer an interesting perspective on the labour market exclusion of immigrants. Building on

Bordieu's idea of "group making", Social Exclusion Theory looks at age, immigrant status, gender, and immigrant status as powerful social dynamics which intersect to create and justify divides between groups and individuals (123). In this context, social exclusion is defined as "official procedures and everyday practices that function to (re)produce and justify economic, spatial, socio-political, and subjective divides" (Lightman and Gingrich, 124). By assigning dominant and subordinate positions, this process of social exclusion cuts off avenues for social mobility, thus denying certain members of society legitimate means of accumulating various types of capital. On the surface, this creates a disparity in material (dis)advantage, but this divide is just as deeply felt on the social level in terms of unequal health outcomes, uneven access to social services, disproportionate levels of political participation, and a stratified sense of belonging.

The social exclusion framework helps to address limitations of poverty research which sees economic constraint as being solely a result of income. This relational framework is rooted in a French concept of *les exclus* (Lenoir, 1974) which looks at the dynamic and uneven social engagements between members of society, which are reproduced through social boundaries. Early social exclusion theories evaded static notions of exclusion and focussed on individual subjectivities and recognition. In modern application, social exclusion policy and research tends to fall back into model of "identifying and measuring easily quantifiable characteristics" which may also serve to reify subordinate positions (Lightman and Gingrich, 123).

Nancy Fraser's work makes a similar case that in identifying (or focussing on) lines of divide we risk solidifying separateness. This is helpful in guiding the application of social exclusion theory - it is useful insofar as it helps to describe dynamics which are often elusive. In the interest of social progress, however, these dynamics may be better understood as fluid rather

than fixed. Fraser makes the case that as globalization creates increasingly transcultural contexts inequalities are exacerbated. She suggests that demands for redistribution have been progressively sidelined as identity politics dominate discourse in a way which may be counterproductive to the cause. Demands for recognition *alone,* she says, may actually encourage inequality insofar as they reinforce group identities in a way which may promote intolerance or separatism. She notes that questions of recognition should *complement* demands for redistribution rather than displace or eclipse them (Fraser, 54). Fraser uses the term "maldistribution" to refer to the unequal distribution of resources which prevents some members of society from "parity of participation" in social life (56).

In reaction to this social subordination, she suggests that injustices be remedied through a new non-identity politics based on a status model. In this way, she suggests we can refocus struggles for redistribution in relation to economic class, rather than reaffirming otherness by the tendency to rally along lines of identity (Fraser, 55). Building on this argument Fraser presents the idea that marginalized groups are stronger in solidarity and that in order to achieve the recognition they seek these groups would do well to push for universal redistribution by incorporating a lens of recognition. Fraser proposes the complementary pairing of redistribution and recognition in a way which "enhances the emancipatory aspects" of each framework through a single model. Her argument is that neither framework alone can remedy existing injustice, but that an integrated approach may provide the necessary grounding for progressive policy (Fraser, Tanner Lecture Series).

Similarly, Susan Strega discusses how hierarchies of oppression can pit those on the margins against each other (Strega, 214). If stratification along lines of identity detracts from the struggle for equality, it follows that the more unity a group has, the more powerful it is. To take

this idea a little further, I would suggest that certain targeted policies and programs -even those created with best intention- may actually have the unintended effect of reaffirming separateness, and solidifying inequalities. This can be applied to a variety of programs, for example Canada's Employment Equity Act. This legislation exists in the spirit of eliminating employment barriers faced by certain groups, but in practice it often has the unintended effect of tokenization. This is based on the mainstream misconception that the program amounts to quota-filling, and that members of minorities benefit by accessing jobs they might not otherwise be qualified for (Labour Canada). An example which applies more directly to newcomer poverty is the effect of welfare programs. In the case of welfare, policy which sets out to mitigate economic inequality results in stigmatization, which reasserts group divides, and deters many individuals from accessing social funds which may be deeply needed.

Building on these theories of maldistribution and social subordination, it is conceivable that thoughtfully designed basic income may have the potential to mitigate the unequal distribution of power and resources. In addition to allowing marginalized groups greater access to (social and cultural) capital, basic income would minimize negative impacts associated with other, means-tested or targeted assistance programs.

III.   **Introduction to basic income**

Basic income is an idea which has been debated among social philosophers and social policy analysts for decades. According to some leading proponents, basic income is: "a blueprint for social justice that is capable of reconciling classical liberal concerns for freedom, efficiency and equality" (Bay and Penderson, 419). The discussion of basic income essentially hinges on two considerations: the *ethical,* and the *economic.* The ethical standpoint is based on social

responsibility -doing the right thing. The economic perspective positions basic income as good fiscal policy based on a cost-benefit analysis (Segal, 2012).

The concept of basic income has roots in 16th century Europe, but gained traction in North America in the last half-century. Between 1968 and 1980 North America was host to five Basic Income pilot programs which sought to examine the impact that such a program might have on the labour market (Forget, 5). These programs were highly experimental and just as preliminary results were being analyzed political winds shifted and these pilot programs were discontinued – in the case of Canada a final report was not even produced (Calnitsky, 65). In recent years basic income has again gained traction as a potential policy response to issues associated with a rapidly shifting labour market, and problems accompanying contemporary welfare policies (Bay and Penderson, 418).

In Canada, the election of a new Liberal government in late 2015 ushered in a renewed political interest in addressing poverty through redistributive policy. As of June 2016 representatives from all three levels of Canadian government have conveyed interest in the idea, including mayors of Edmonton and Calgary, and several Members of Parliament. Some political traction is happening - a cabinet minister in Quebec has been assigned to study basic income; Ontario's 2016 provincial budget includes funds for a pilot program; and as of June the province has appointed a Special Advisor on Basic Income (Associated Press). Progress is slow, but promising. The province will likely take their time in the consulting and drafting process to ensure that pilot parameters are widely acceptable, and group impacts are well anticipated.

Social reform of this kind is both symbolic and significant. For the idealist it is a grand statement of inclusion –an absolution of responsibility for those marginalized by existing

economic structures, and a means of shifting public attitudes around deservingness. For the pragmatist it is a mechanism for resource distribution which recognizes the social spending associated with poverty, and seeks to intervene by providing a more liveable wage to the poor. There are as many configurations of basic income as there are terms to describe it: annual guaranteed income, citizens' wage, universal welfare, to name a few. One of the appeals of this idea is its fluidity - basic income provides a framework for economic justice which can be tailored to fit the needs of the population. In some cases, basic income may replace existing social programs, while in others it merely fills in the gaps (Widerquist, n.p.). These details are negotiable, as are the taxation mechanisms. What remains at the core is the notion that society functions more fully when citizens are not struggling to meet their basic needs.

Basic income trials

There are few (if any) contemporary examples of states providing basic income. There are several examples of generous welfare states which have anti-poverty approaches similar to basic income, and several historical examples of basic income pilot programs, but only a couple contemporary instances of government granted unconditional/universal (basic) income. This section will introduce examples from each of those categories in order to illuminate the anti-poverty landscape, and to better assess in what contexts basic income may be successful.

The state of Alaska has an existing policy model in place which can be likened to basic income, and which is useful for comparative purposes. Known as the Alaskan Permanent Fund this redistributive model pays regular dividends to state residents, in part with the profits gained from the state's oil industry. Dividends are paid to residents (regardless of age or income), based on a yearly calculation formula which captures average state investment gains in the past five

years. On average, this amounts to a resident benefit of around 1300 USD per year (.Laurinavičius, 56). Despite being a match with basic income concepts, there is no explicit Constitutional language which ties the program to the anti-poverty ethos of basic income. In this case, residents are more likely to view Permanent Fund returns as stable dividends rather than benefits meant to ensure a standard of living above the poverty line. Because the program is not explicitly constructed as basic income, there is a lack of data collection on how this benefit interacts with other indicators of wellbeing including health, education and community participation

A more recent example of a contemporary basic income program is found in the autonomous (Chinese) territory of Macau. Since 2008 the government has extended a dividend benefit program to residents. This example is unique because the government has devised a two-tier payment system based on residency status: *permanent* residents receive around $1125 US dollars, and *non-permanent* residents receive roughly $675 US; benefits are subject to valid residency identification (Laurinavičius, 58). As in Alaska, the program is aimed at redistributing wealth gained from economic development in the area. Both examples fit the basic income model, but because they are small-scale, and not explicitly implemented as anti-poverty projects there is a lack of literature on how the implementation of these programs impacts the social symptoms of poverty.

Findings from welfare states

In recent decades Nordic countries (namely: Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden) have been held as benchmarks for social democracy, due in part to their generous universal welfare programs. As Caputo puts it, basic income differs from welfare schemes

currently present in Europe in three key ways: "it is paid to individuals; it is paid irrespective of

income from other sources…and it does not require the performance of any work or the

willingness to accept a job if offered" (511). Nevertheless, the Nordic model is helpful for

comparison as it represents one of the most successful modern anti-poverty approaches. It also

provides a body of literature to draw on regarding the impact of more generous welfare on

immigration policies, as well as attitudes and behaviours around immigrant participation in

social assistance programs.

While program administration varies across countries, these welfare states are funded

through taxation, and are built on universalist model designed to enhance autonomy and promote

social mobility. Nordic welfare policies have helped to keep poverty levels low in comparison to

most Western nations, but are these cases comparable to Canada? In many ways, yes, but there is

one key difference to consider: ethnocultural diversity. The success of universal welfare in these

countries has been dubbed "Scandinavian exceptionalism" by some critics who note that the

relative ethnic, religious, and linguistic homogeneity of these Scandinavian states fosters a strong

social solidarity which may be necessary to support generous redistributive policies of this kind.

In Denmark, this homogeneity is even structurally enforced through an assimilative immigration

policy (Sainsbury, 213).

Some useful insight into the politics of inclusion and exclusion in welfare states can be

found in Diane Sainsbury's research comparing the cases of Sweden and Denmark. This research

finds that despite apparently similar contexts (and political institutions) these two countries

exhibit stark differences in their approaches to immigrant social assistance entitlement. By

tracing the development of their respective immigration policy approaches post-1960, Sainsbury

finds important differences in the framing of these programs – which become steadily less

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similar (214). In this case, of all European welfare states examined, Sweden had developed the most universally inclusive welfare program, whereas Denmark's approach to universal welfare had become increasingly exclusionary.

By design, the Danish welfare model guarantees free healthcare, education, and other benefits to all residents -but this generosity has proven limited when it comes to new residents. In response to an influx of asylum seekers in August, 2015 the government cut social benefits to immigrants and refugees by 45 percent, a move which the state even advertised in an effort to dissuade would-be migrants. In January, 2016 Denmark passed even more drastic legislation enabling the state to seize any assets exceeding $1,450 in order to help cover subsistence costs for the migrants (Delman, n.p.) On the other hand, immigrants in Sweden are eligible for "introduction benefits" from the Swedish Employment Agency which grants a supplementary income of around $770 per month to newcomers. After residing in Sweden for one year, those registered with the Social Insurance Agency are entitled to residence-based allowances (Delman).

This raises the question: how do similar programs implemented in comparable contexts came to produce such varied outcomes? Sainsbury theorizes that the political framing around these programs created the contexts for inclusion/exclusion. She attributes this (in part) to the political leanings of their respective governments. Since the 1960s polling strength for right-wing parties has been consistently stronger in Denmark than in Sweden. More starkly, the continuous existence of an anti-immigrant party in Denmark (since the late 1970's) is a major contextual consideration attributed to Denmark's increasingly exclusionary welfare model (Sainsbury, 242).

These cases are important to consider as they give us context for the different ways in which apparently generous policies may be interpreted or applied. In drafting basic income policy it is necessary to consider the impact that such a program will have on immigration policy, and to consider whether generous welfare policies and humanitarian immigration intake can coexist. Building on Sainsbury's findings, the absence of an anti-immigrant party, and the existence of a strong multicultural framework in Canada provide some hope that the two are not mutually exclusive.

In Finland, a partial basic income trial is set to run from 2017-2017.The experiment will provide 560 Euro a month to a randomly selected group of individuals already receiving unemployment insurance, and will provide benefits in addition to existing payouts. The experiment seeks to measure whether basic income reduces the incentive trap (i.e. terminating benefits once a job is found) for welfare recipients (BIEN). While the experiment is limited by time and budgetary constraints, it will likely provide useful insight into labour behaviours in a basic income environment, which could be leveraged towards a full-scale implementation.

North American Guaranteed Annual Income Trials

Perhaps the most useful comparative examples can be pulled from North America's basic income experiments carried out between the 1960's and 1970's. There were five trials during this time which marked the first (North American) attempt at measuring the social impact of a universal and unconditional basic income. The trial results are limited in some ways (by inconsistent funding and data collection) however there are significant findings which support the merit of future trials. In America these studies came on the heels of the Civil Rights Movement, when residents began to problematize the deep poverty which somehow withstood

the postwar economic boom. The newly elected democratic government sought to address this by implementing a series of incremental changes catering to the working poor.

With poverty on the national agenda, a more comprehensive anti-poverty model became the subject of debate. The idea of a Guaranteed Annual income, administered as negative income tax model was floated for years. This model was meant to help recipients move beyond the welfare trap by eliminating inconsistencies present in existing programs, and by doing away with the high marginal tax rates which dis-incentivised welfare recipients from working. When Nixon came to office in 1969 the first GAI experiment was finally rolled out.

As one of the largest social experiments of its time, the GAI study sought to gauge the impact of unconditional transfers on labour market participation. Eventually four experimental GAI programs were in place across the country. One important shortcoming of early GAI studies is that they were modelled on natural science, and sought very concrete (statistical) data. As Caputo puts it "the labour supply results are important but they tell us little about the people populating these studies, how they understood the program, how it impacted their experience in community life, and whether participation came with social-psychological costs" (Calnitsky, 28).

In terms of labour market participation results showed a 13% reduction from the family as a whole. On an individual level this amounted to a minor decrease of roughly 4.3% dispersed among primary, secondary, and tertiary earners (Forget, 5). A more in-depth analysis shows that while female earners were slower to re-enter the workforce, they were more likely to engage in domestic production, particularly taking care of newborns. Tertiary earners (most often adolescents) were slower to enter the workforce – which in many cases meant spending more time in school. Positive school continuation rates and adult education rates were observed, and

where data on test scores was collected, there was a correlation between GAI and improved scores. As results from this experiment emerged, so did other research areas: health impact, family formation and fertility, and capital accumulation were all built into collection methods of further studies.

Despite initial positive outcomes, a finding (from one experience) which doomed the program was the 53-57% increase in divorce rate among families receiving GAI –this finding was revisited in 1990 by researchers who rejected it as a statistical error. Nevertheless, at a time when the family was a pillar of American society, this sensationalized statistic linking basic income with family dissolution was unacceptable, and caused even some of the foremost GAI advocates to withdraw support. By the 1970's this finding, along with the modest decreases in work effort were portrayed as disastrous and political support for the programs diminished. In addition, some high profile politicians accused experimental families of "double dipping" and welfare fraud, which signalled the end of America's GAI moment (Forget, 6).

Mincome – findings from Canada

In Canada, studies by the Economic Council of Canada and the National Department of Health and Welfare were carried out, which finally recognized poverty as a multidimensional issue. The 1971 Croll Report, along with the Castonguay-Nepveu Commission report were the first to recommended a universal minimum income. A Social Security Review which soon followed supported this recommendation, and in 1974 Canada's first GAI experiment was underway. The pilot was rolled out in Manitoba, and was fittingly named "Mincome" (Manitoba basic income).

The Mincome experiment randomly selected families from Winnipeg, and a "saturation" site in the rural town of Dauphin, where all residents were eligible to receive guaranteed annual income for three years. A number of residents from other rural localities were included to serve as "controls" for the Dauphin participants. Winnipeg participants were also matched with randomly selected "controls" from the same community. The project was initially introduced by Mincome staff who made home-visits, but following the prospective interview the program could be completed through mail (Calnitsky, 32).

As with the American pilots, the primary goal of these experiments was to measure the impact of unconditional income on labour behaviours –deemed the "work effect". The observed work effect was slight – roughly a 1% decrease for men and 3% decrease for women. As in the US, this data was interpreted to mean that school-aged students (especially males) were entering the workforce later, and that women were spending more time engaged in childrearing and other domestic labour. One of the most economically significant findings was an 8% decrease in hospitalization rates – especially hospitalization related to accident and injury, and mental health (Forget, 6).

Some of the most insightful findings came from this study came from the nine-page self-report surveys. These surveys were issued to Mincome participants, Manitoba welfare recipients, and a control group of random non-recipients from other Manitoba towns. The survey included both Likert scale questions, and opened-ended prompts which allowed for the collection of some insightful qualitative data. The data collected from these surveys is particularly important as it goes beyond the labour market statistics and sheds light on the potential social impact of universal, unconditional benefits.

Perhaps most importantly is a finding (from the community time-use section of the survey) which supports the hypothesis that universal/ unconditional benefits reduce barriers to community participation and decrease probability of social isolation. In this case Mincome participants (and non-participating community members) were "less likely to report spending no spare time with friends, neighbours, relatives, and workmates" as compared to welfare recipients. In addition, non-welfare recipients were "less likely to spend time at home and more likely to spend time at other people's homes" (Calnitsky, 48).   Other important findings include:

- 98% of Mincome recipients attributed no community tension to program participation (as compared to 72% of welfare participants)

- 92% of Mincome participants reported "never" feeling embarrassed in the company of those not on the same program (as compared to 65% welfare participants)

Mincome participants also reported among the least difficulty with banks and lending institutions, and the least hiding of program participation. The community group participation of Mincome recipients was consistent with non-participating community members (Calnitsky, 52).

Unfortunately, a lack of funding and a change in government meant that the program was discontinued and findings were archived without being properly analyzed. Recent interest in basic income, however, means that researchers have revisited archived data in an effort to digest findings from the Mincome experiment. Despite a limited sample size, a lot can be learned from the qualitative results about the role of stigma, and social exclusion. If we can extrapolate these findings for the immigrant community, the social impact of basic income has the potential to be huge. Based on results from both Mincome and the Nordic model, we can see that program design and framing will greatly impact its social interpretation. With proper project design, a

basic income pilot which reproduces this de-stigmatizing effect may have the potential to address cycles of poverty, stigmatization, and social exclusion which many immigrants experience.

IV. Welfare and stigma

The current welfare system in Canada exists as a means-tested last resort. The rules for eligibility vary across provinces based on regional economics and assessment criteria. In all cases filing for low-income assistance requires that applicants be willing to divulge information regarding any (and every) source of income, including: inheritance and asset sales, any work earnings, as well as other benefits received from the government, such as child benefits, or disability pension. Applicants are required to demonstrate willingness to work, and may be required to participate in job-training programs. In addition, to receive a monthly benefit, recipients must be ready to report regularly to a social worker or Canada Revenue Agency representative. Adding to an already intrusive process, 1990 the welfare system in Canada saw sweeping reforms that some called "a war on the poor" (Chunn, 218). In Ontario, reforms included drastic cuts to benefits, a quit/fire regulation (meaning resigning or being fired from employment rendered applicants ineligible), and also involved the implementation of drug testing and biometric testing. In addition, a policy of "zero tolerance" rendered any person convicted of a fraudulent claim permanently ineligible for low income assistance. Further, anonymous call lines were established to report anyone suspected of attempted welfare fraud (218). These policy changes infringed on the autonomy and dignity of recipients, and created a more complex application process where accidental error (both by applicants and administrators) became common. These changes effectively increased state surveillance, and created a system of moral regulation which perpetuated the notion of "the undeserving poor" (Chunn, 230). The

intensified regulation of social assistance increased in-group/out-group divides, and adds to the burden of those already struggling with inadequate income.

In addition to reasserting group divides, there is a psychological cost to current welfare schemes – research shows that welfare recipients are likely to internalize society's negative perceptions, resulting in a negative (or inferior) self-image (Calnitsky, 54). This ties back to the negative stigma associated with means-tested social assistance programs. As national interest in basic income has re-emerged in recent years, scholarship on the role of stigmatization in these programs has also increased as researchers endeavour to quantify the role that stigma plays in uptake behaviours. In a study on social assistance stigmatization carried out in the UK, researchers found that 27% of respondents reported that "shame would make them less likely to claim benefit" *even if* they were eligible and in need (Baumberg, 193).

Immigrant uptake of social assistance

One of the arguments against universal welfare which tends to surface in the Canadian basic income debate is the notion that such policy will create a "welfare magnet" driving migration (Howard, 4). This argument hinges on the mainstream misconception that immigrants are more likely to rely on welfare programs than native-born Canadians. While it is true that immigrants are disproportionately impoverished and, as a result, may be disproportionately reflected in social welfare spending, evidence shows that *all else being equal* immigrants are no more likely than native born to access social assistance (Ostrovsky, 106). By analyzing immigrant participation in entitlement programs for the period of 1993-2007 Ostovsky finds "little evidence of rising immigrant participation in Social Assistance, either across recent arrival cohorts or with years in Canada" (107). In fact, the study finds that immigrant participation in

traditional welfare programs (social assistance, for example) has actually declined from 1993 to 2007 (Ostrovsky, 107).

These relatively low social assistance recipiency rates among immigrants are not by accident, but by design. The Canadian immigration system is tailored to minimize reliance on social assistance programs. As such, the current entry channels prioritize applicants based on factors (language education, and Canadian experience) which predict easier entry into the labour market. Similarly, the family reunification stream requires that applicants accept a lengthy sponsorship term wherein applicant families must prove they have the resources and willingness to support their relatives. In most cases this period extends for a ten year period; in the case of parent/grandparent sponsorship this period last 20 years (Banting, 169)

Sponsorship is a legally binding contract with the Canadian government, which makes the sponsor responsible for ensuring their family member does not seek social assistance during the sponsorship term. Despite these mechanisms to reduce immigrant reliance on welfare, immigrant poverty has been on the rise for the past two decades and following the 2008 recession rates of immigrant participation in social assistance rose slightly above native-born numbers (Banting, 170).

Deservingness and the importance of discourse

A theme that is intricately tied to social assistance policy and uptake is how mainstream morality regarding dependency or deservingness impacts behaviours. An article which takes an interesting look at this is *Public opinion, prejudice and the racialization of welfare in Canada*. This article addresses "the dominant, even pathological, view is that welfare creates a dependency on the state" (Harell, 7). In this view, those who rely on welfare to support

themselves are seen as responsible for their situation, due to lack of a work ethic or moral character. Harell finds that public discourse has a big role in creating the (problematic) myth of the undeserving poor. Similarly, she finds that framing has a direct impact on public attitudes towards redistribution. These findings are consistent with one European case study which finds that (of those interviewed) every second EU citizen supports the statement that "people from ethnic minority groups misuse the social welfare system" (Bay and Penderson, 432). Interestingly, the proportion of individuals supporting this statement increased in the period 1997 to 2000 (432). These perceptions are formed in relation to mainstream ideas around welfare, which are based on program framing.

In their study of perceptions of deservingness in Finland, Kallio and Kouvo find that support for universal welfare is greatly correlated to perceptions of the deservingness of recipients; in essence, it boils down to *who* should get *what* and *why*. Building on a model proposed by Van Oorshot, they outline the five criteria which factor into deservingness: *need, control, identity, attitude,* and *reciprocity. Need* refers to the degree of need, and the willingness of others to offer support; *Control* is the degree to which the needy are seen as responsible for their situation; *Identity* has to do with belonging and proximity of the person in need in relation to those who can provide support; *Attitude* is the gratefulness or apathy of the needy party; and *Reciprocity* has to do with the degree to which the needy person has (or will) contribute to society (Kallio and Kouva, 317).

This model can be applied to understand one of the most successful contemporary Canadian welfare programs – old age security. As per the criteria outlined, the elderly are perceived as among the most deserving groups because they are not viewed as responsible for their needy situation (*control*); they may also be characterized as being generally undemanding

(*attitude*), and viewed as belonging to a sort of in-group (*identity*); and having a life of work behind them provides proof of *reciprocity* to society. This same model may be applied to understand why certain groups are perceived as less deserving. Immigrants, for example, are "not necessarily seen as belonging to our imagined community" (*identity*). Further, because they are newcomers other citizens may doubt whether they have contributed to society or will do so in the future (*reciprocity*) (Kallio and Kouva, 318). Interestingly, the Finnish study found that younger respondents were more accepting of welfare recipients and likely to view welfare as normative – a social right – whereas older groups were likely to see welfare participation as something shameful, or which excluded participants from a "normal" way of life (Kallio and Kouva, 319).

V.   Implementation of basic income: challenges and opportunities

It is well founded that racialized persons face greater barriers to labour market integration, including discriminatory hiring practices, more precarious work, and lesser compensation for their labour (Banting, 470). So what does this mean as the Canadian population becomes increasingly diverse? Will the income gap in Canada continue to be divided along racial lines? How can we address this growing divide? These questions will only become more pressing as diversity rises. At present, it is estimated that as many as 78% of recent immigrants are in a racialized group; accordingly, Statistics Canada has projected that by 2031 racialized groups will make up 33% of the total national population (Alladini, 90).

One important consideration for basic income is the degree to which cultural homogeneity factors into the success of redistributive policy. In other words, it will be important

to question whether significant diversity might undermine a popularized basic income plan. As

Bay and Penderson phrase it:

> Sustained support by a majority of the population is
> likely to require a high degree of trust, identification
> and sympathy with fellow citizens and/or a strong
> commitment to egalitarian values. It is therefore
> highly relevant to ask under what conditions, if any,
> one can expect that there would be broad popular
> support for such a radical scheme in the electorates
> of contemporary nation states.

420.

Designing a universally applicable basic income scheme in a country as diverse as

Canada is admittedly a large undertaking; the degree to which majority support for redistribution

can flourish in a multicultural context is an ongoing consideration. Some social policy analysts

express concern that higher levels of ethnic diversity will coincide with decreased support for

redistributive policy. Several studies have taken different approaches to capture the impact of

diversity on redistribution. Luttmer's work looks at the connection between ethnic homogeneity

and generosity of redistribution by using the lens of interpersonal preference to examine the

mechanisms behind fluctuations in support. Luttmer's research findings show that attitudes

towards social spending are impacted by interpersonal preferences in two key ways: *group*

loyalty and *negative exposure effect.* Group loyalty describes how support for social spending

increases as the share of recipients from one's own race group rises; and negative exposure effect

is the process by which support for social spending declines as welfare recipiency in one's own

community rises (Luttmer, 6).

In the cases of other country contexts (particularly the US) it is well founded that

multiculturalism is at odds with generous welfare policy. One study by Gilen found that attitudes

about race are the single most important factor to US opposition to welfare – a finding that is

supported by a wide range of other research (Banting et al. 166). In comparison with other

OECD countries, however, Banting et al. make the claim that tension between ethnic diversity

and redistribution is less prevalent in Canada. They find that Canadians are more likely to

believe that immigration has a positive impact on the economy, and are less likely to support

calls for reducing immigration. When focusing more directly on the link between diversity and

support for social programs, this comfort holds.

One of the primary arguments against unconditional wage is that it would encourage

people not to work, or create a welfare magnet-state. These concerns have been considered and

addressed with the research available. Findings from North American basic income trials show

that labour market participation is impacted only marginally (roughly %3). The impact that basic

income would have on immigration policy in Canada has very little direct literature. The impact

is best predicted by gauging the currently political climate, and looking at histories of

inclusion/exclusion in Canada, as well as comparable countries. At present, heightened diversity

does not seem to negatively impact public support for redistribution; although support does

decline when the "immigrant" frame is presented. If findings from Europe are transferable, we

can gather (from the Sweden/Denmark example) that a history of multicultural policy will

predict a more generous extension of benefits than a context with openly anti-immigrant

sentiments.

While there is not a wide body of literature pertaining to Canadians' explicit attitudes

towards immigrants, there are some hopeful findings. The 2009 "Transatlantic Trends" study by

the ICPSR (Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research) found that three-

quarters of Canadians agree with the statement that "legal immigrants are entitled to the same

social benefits as native-born Canadians" (Banting, 165). A second study which indicates that

rising diversity has *not* negatively impacted attitudes towards redistribution is the Canadian Election Study (CES). Between 1997 and 2011 the public were polled on five occasions and asked to respond to the statement "we should look after Canadians born in this country first, and other second"; over time, the percentage of the population who "agree" or "strongly agree" with this statement has decreased from 50 percent in 1997, to 38 percent in 2011 (Konig, 165). It is also worth noting that despite a slower process of economic integration for immigrants in recent decade "there has been no concomitant rise in pleas for welfare exclusion". In other words: "relatively independent of empirical reality, the political translation of immigrants' economic integration has mostly been a positive one" (154).

Looking at the past twenty years of Canadian social benefits, Konig finds the entitlement of immigrants has rarely been challenged. There are several exceptions: undocumented migrants, family class migrants, and refugee claimants have periodically been framed as non-deserving, or positioned by right-wing politicians for exclusion from welfare policies (Banting, 164). These exceptions aside, the existence of official multiculturalism policy in Canada *does* appear to positively influence mainstream views around immigration. Even Canadians who believe that immigrants rely heavily on welfare benefits are more apt to support redistributive economic policy than citizens from comparable countries (Konig, 164). Further, though feelings of trust are likely to decline in diverse neighbourhoods, support for social programs (in the same context) does not decline accordingly (169). This finding is significant because it addresses the concern that interpersonal trust may be eroded by multiculturalism in a way which undermines redistributive policy. Banting makes the case that trust in government institutions may be more important in support for redistributive policies than interpersonal trust (168).

Establishing entitlement for immigrants

One complication which arises in the basic income debate is the defining the segment of society which would be entitled to benefits. As has been discussed, different governments have taken different approaches to establishing entitlement around redistribution; most often, benefit entitlement is built around age and residency status. At present, social benefits in Canada are extended to all those with "approved residential ties" to the country. Thus, once immigrants gain an approved resident status and establish a social insurance number, they are eligible for tax benefits; this includes persons protected under the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act; those who have applied for or received permanent resident status; and temporary residents who have received "approval in principal" from Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada (Canada Revenue Agency).

Benefits which are currently extended to those meeting Canadian residency requirements include: Employment Insurance, Goods and Services/Harmonized Sales Tax credits, provincial/territorial benefits and credits, and Canada Child Benefits -for married or common-law couples with children under 18 (Canada Revenue Agency). While these programs are available, they are not easily accessible- as with low income assistance these benefits are heavily regulated by the welfare surveillance regime. In response to this, basic income provides an alternative distribution system which is (more) automatic, and unconditional and thus more truly accessible to those in need. If basic income were implemented, it is likely that immigrant eligibility would depend upon the similar residency criterion as current social benefits. Howard puts it quite simply: "people who have been legally admitted, allowed to reside, to work, and who (often) are required to pay taxes, cannot be denied the benefits of full membership, even if they are not citizens" (Howard, 8).

There is one foreseeable exception here which presents an ethical and administrative dilemma – the Temporary Foreign Worker Program. Despite paying into income tax, employment insurance, and contributing to Canada Pension Plan, temporary foreign workers do not generally receive any benefits from these programs because once their employment contract ends they are not permitted to remain in Canada – with rare exceptions (Elgersma, n.p). For these, and a number of other reasons, the controversial program is currently under Parliamentary review (as of August, 2016). It is worth noting, however, that this is a unique category of restricted inclusion which may present a challenge when it comes to establishing basic income inclusion criterion.

While immigrant entitlement to basic income has not yet been a focus in the Canadian basic income debate, it may be possible to predict how political handling would play out based on the current climate. Encouragingly, in Canada the issue of immigrant welfare is rarely on the agenda – when these issues do surface they are more often discussed as indicators of failed economic integration than as evidence of immigration posing a drain on public welfare. In Konig's study of attitudes towards immigrants' rights, Konig finds that representatives from each the three primary federal parties indicated an important consensus of rejecting "differentiation in social rights" between immigrants and native-born Canadian. Not surprisingly, the Liberal and Conservative parties responded in favour of a selective entry process, as per the traditional strategy of regulating welfare claimants. All parties were in agreement that greater integration assistance could serve as a strategy for reducing immigrant reliance on social welfare (Konig, 175).

Promises and challenges for basic income in Canada

As has been demonstrated, a lot has been written on the economic outcomes of newcomers in Canada, specifically the trend of progressively decreasing prospects for increasingly skilled migrants. The literature gives a full picture of the various ways in which economic pressures impact immigrants and their families, as well as the economic adaptation strategies, and social implications associated. The literature also shines light on some of the social factors creating these conditions of scarcity, including: embedded racial hierarchies, professional gatekeeping and issues with foreign credential recognition. Though Canada has various programs in place to target poverty, the existing programs are means-tested and require recipients to stand up and self-identify as poor, which results in further stigmatization. In addition, there is evidence to support that these programs rarely reduce poverty because of the claw-back features, which effectively disincentivize work in the formal market (Laurinavičius, 52).

All this is to say that the current social assistance programs in Canada inadequately address, and systemically reproduce poverty. Crafting a response to racialized poverty requires an understanding of the complexity of the issue. Beyond economic scarcity, poverty represents deprivation in terms of status and power. When combined with immigrant status, poverty takes on a new level of deprivation. This intersection of identities exacerbates vulnerability and creates the conditions for a cycle of social exclusion. As noted, without intervention this cycle is likely to persist inter-generationally. It is worth questioning whether racialization can truly be addressed by policy – and beyond that, how does a government begin to address a problem of this scope?

Calnitsky's analysis of the Mincome experiment shows that the framing of the project had the power to totally alter the social meaning, in a way which made it widely accessible and buffered it from the usual stigma attached to social assistance. Findings from Mincome self-reporting showed that even those who were morally opposed to welfare and reported negative attitudes towards social assistance recipients felt able to collect because they viewed the program pragmatically rather than moralistically. Because the program was normalized, and widely viewed as a program "for everyone" rather than for the poor, participants did not feel conflicted about participating (28). These conditions of universal acceptance were built into the pilot program from its inception. The letter circulated to potential participants framed the program as a "contribution to science" and a potential benefit to "all Canadians", which differentiated the program from notions of dependence (30). By design, all groups were handled under a unified scheme – this blurred lines of divide between earning levels and employed / non-employed persons. By opening up the program to all residents, Mincome also made available a range of explanations for participation ("contributing to science", "extra income", "curiosity" etc.) It is significant that by changing the framing of the program, it was possible to shift the perceived meaning of a social assistance program, in a way which made it ideologically acceptable even for those with negative attitudes towards traditional welfare.

This finding regarding the impact of framing is consistent with Harell's (less positive) findings about identity cues and deservingness. Drawing on the 2011 Canadian Election Survey results, Harell examines whether citizen support for social assistance is altered when respondents are given identity cues about benefit recipients. Results show that social support decreases dramatically when respondents receive cues indicating that the recipients are Aboriginal. Harell notes that the prominent pairing of Aboriginal (or immigrant) frames with mainstream coverage

of welfare programs helps to reassert ideas around deservingness and reliance, and is likely to activate negative racial stereotypes in respondents (7). These groups are more likely to be viewed as taking advantage of government benefits – a narrative which may be tied to the tension which arises from competition for resources between the "deserving" majority and the "undeserving" other. Thus, negative support for redistribution may be linked both to embedded stereotypes, and (real or imagined) competition for resources. This finding speaks to the power of subconscious association, and supports the potential of a universally applicable policy to sidestep negative associations which may be attached to targeted programs (30.)

These findings connect to Fraser's theory of identity and recognition which proposes a new approach to identity politics. By galvanizing around a push for redistribution, marginalized groups might see greater results than in direct demands for recognition. In theory, the success of this movement would more equitably allocate resources which (in turn) addresses the need for greater recognition by sharing the social capital which is lacking in non-recognition. By addressing the stigmatization and scarcity mindset associated with poverty, basic income could give voice and greater belonging to those whose identities may otherwise preclude them from influence in the public domain.

It is a hopeful moment when political interest aligns with a cause that may genuinely hold emancipatory potential for marginalized groups. As the idea of basic income gains attention in Canada, there is reason to be cautiously optimistic. A lot is riding on Ontario's pilot program, and there are many challenging details to work out including: amount of benefit, taxation mechanism, test community, and indicators of success. In truth, working out the economic details of basic income is one of the greatest challenges. There is no standard template to draw from, and working out the appropriate amount and distribution mechanism takes extensive

consideration to design. Whether a basic income program should complement or replace existing social assistance programs remains on the table. A partial basic income could be implemented as a top-up to existing social programs, but would not enjoy the administrative savings of full basic income. On the other hand, a full basic income which replaced (all or most) existing social benefits would need to be adequately generous to account to be publicly acceptable. There is also the potential of administering via a negative income tax model. The best way of administering basic income in Canada requires extensive consideration beyond the scope of this paper. The pilot program will need to be economically both politically and economically feasible which requires a fine balance between being too generous to sustain, and being too meagre to effect change. Learning from shortcomings in previous experiments will mean working out a system of data collection which is both comprehensive and non-intrusive. Importantly, developing a metric for community benefits such as social inclusion will help to move the basic income debate beyond the economic by demonstrating sociological impact.

VI. Conclusion

Ultimately, there is no silver bullet for immigrant poverty. The processes which underlie it are deeply rooted: colonialism, systemic discrimination. An effective response will require a multi-pronged approach designed in consultation with community stakeholders. Based on the findings presented, basic income seems to offer an opportunity to address this economic disparity and to intervene in processes of social exclusion. Former Senator Hugh Segal (appointed Ontario's Special Advisor on Basic Income in June, 2016) nicely articulates how Basic Income would improve upon current poverty reduction policy:

> Being poor would become a problem we all buffered in the same
> way as we buffer all Canadians relative to health care. Only a

small portion of Canadians needs expensive health care at any one time. But we are there to help as members of a competitive, free market and coherent society—not by embarrassing them with governments asking why they are sick, but by letting their universal health coverage, financed by general revenue, see them through.

Forget, 86.

Based on findings from previous trials, there are three key aspects which would contribute to the success of a program (from an immigrant poverty perspective): uniform treatment of recipients; automatic delivery; and non-moral framing. By treating typically divided groups under a unified scheme basic income can transcend identity lines that are otherwise fortified by welfare programs. This assists in normalizing social assistance by doing away with categories which create stigma for certain groups. If participation is open to all residents, insider/outsider distinctions are weakened.

Second, the more automaticity a program has, the less likely it is to be accompanied by stigma. By reducing the discretionary power of individual caseworkers, and decreasing the intrusiveness of service delivery, the program can become less of an ordeal. A less intrusive delivery model might rely on annual income taxes and automatized payments over caseworker meetings and rigorous application processes. Finally, the framing of such a program will govern its interpretation by the community. This aspect is more difficult to control, and will be partially consequential, however optimal framing will be non-moral. The best example for this comes from the framing of the Mincome experiment as "a contribution to science" which was "available to everyone" (Calnitsky, 35). As has been discussed, by distancing redistribution programs from notions of deservingness they become more widely acceptable, even to those with

negative views of social assistance. By creating a program for everyone the assistance becomes normalized and may transcend the moral regulation associated with current welfare models.

These aspects are especially relevant for immigrant groups who may already be "othered" or have their deservingness questioned. The more basic income can treat recipients uniformly, the more universally acceptable it will be. On practical level, universal/unconditional income would break down barriers around access to resources. On a deeper level, this would provide a counterbalance to systemic processes of social exclusion which are difficult to address directly, and which impede certain members of society from accumulating capital. In this way basic income can be said to have emancipatory potential which reaches beyond the economic.

Immigrant poverty (and the underlying racialization of poverty) is clearly an insidious force threatening community cohesion in Canada. As diversity rises, so does economic disparity – this is no coincidence. The experience of scarcity has been shown to shape human experience on all levels, from education, health, and employment prospects, to community participation, and even self-perception. When coupled with an immigrant experience, the experience of poverty is often intensified. Lack of capital translates into lack of power, and without these resources a person is impeded from full participation in society. As such, many of the integration issues arising from newcomer poverty could be addressed by targeting this cycle of exclusion through a redistribution of resources.

This is not to suggest that basic income is a cure-all or an antidote for discrimination – rather, it is to present the notion that by universalizing welfare policy we can bring members in from the margins, and foster group unity in a way that targeted programs cannot. By addressing the economic barriers to inclusion, we invite more voices to the conversation, and enable

community participation which may not otherwise be possible. Economic reforms alone will not adequately address immigrant poverty, but it provides a hopeful starting point. As the idea of basic income gains new momentum, it is important that upcoming pilot programs be crafted in consultation with community stakeholders, including immigrant groups and anti-racist alliances. With proper framing and policy consideration basic income could present a radical avenue for social justice, with emancipatory potential for the immigrant population.

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