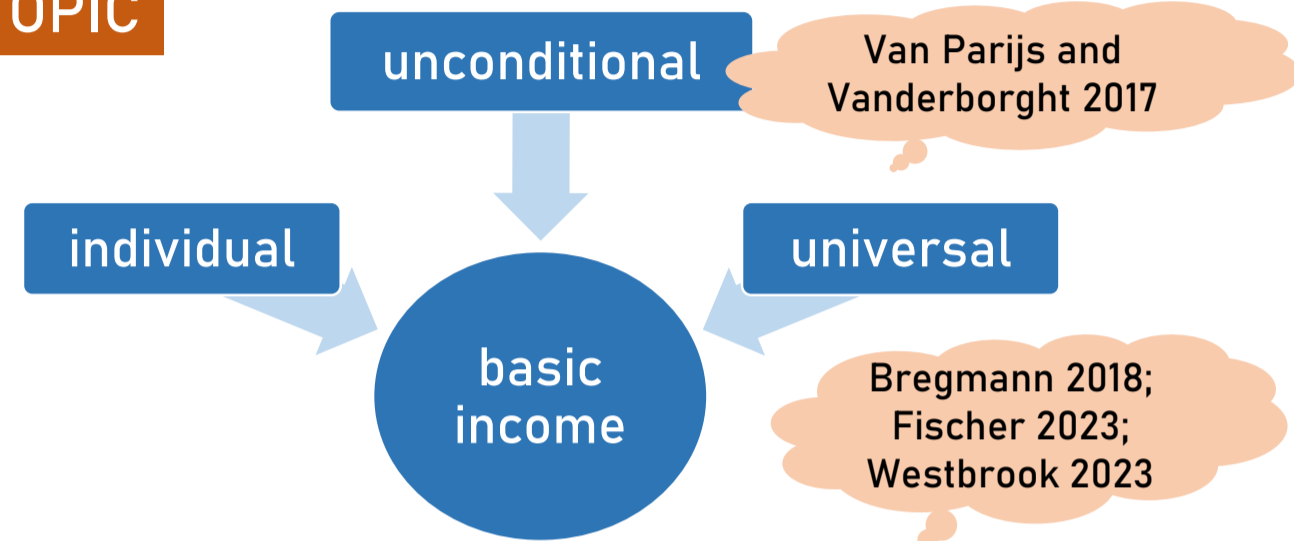


Basic income and homelessness: improving the situation of the least advantaged?

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TOPIC



Special focus: homelessness

RESEARCH QUESTION

How does a basic income introduction affect the living situation of homeless individuals in Germany?

METHOD

Thought experiment: evaluating basic income introduction according to philosophical justifications based on theoretical and empirical literature

GERMAN CASE

- 262600 homeless individuals in 2022
- Mostly in metropolitan regions
- More men than women (two third)
- More men on the street
- More women with acquaintances
- More families/minors in shelters
- More non-German residents in shelters
- More German citizens on the street

BMAS 2022;
Brüchmann et al. 2022;
Sonnenberg 2021;
Skzcepanek 2021

Risk factors:

- Rental arrears
- Missing social net
- Moving/migrating

Exit barriers:

- Bureaucracy
- Welfare structure
- Behavioral change

THEORY

Maximin distribution rule (Rawls 1999):
For a society to be just, it needs to maximize the index of social goods of the least advantaged person.

Real libertarianism
(Van Parijs 1991, 1997; Van Parijs and Vanderborght 2017)

Liberal egalitarianism
(Mc Kinnon 2003; Festl 2013; Fukuma 2017; Birnbaum 2010)

Republicanism
(Raventós 2007; Pettit 2007; Casassas and De Wispelaere 2016)

Maximizing of ...

... opportunity

... self-respect

... power

Van Parijs 1997, p. 5

Neuhäuser 2018, p. 80

Pettit 2007, p. 4

“access to the means for doing what one might want to do”

“self-respect is about perceiving oneself as an equal human being”

“being empowered against such control on the part of others”

THOUGHT

Replace Bürgergeld (~500 euros) with residence- or citizenship-based basic income

STATUS QUO

~35 % of homeless individuals without income

Subject to prejudice, no feeling of community

Violence by fellow residents and unsuccessful support by authorities

POSSIBLE EFFECTS

- More salient, no means-test: reduces income loss due to complexity or missing information
- Unconditional: forecloses sanctions
Individual: less financial dependence by cohabiting
- But amount too small to foreclose rental arrears

- No means-test: stigma relieving
- Less financial dependence: enabling choice of self-respect enhancing community
- Residence-based: coverage problem with missing ID
- Citizenship-based: dual tier society

- Prejudice might increase, violence might persist or increase
- Emancipation: less dependence on acquaintances due to possibility of rent payment, individuality of payment enables separation
- Unconditional: decreases power asymmetries between homeless and public institutions

Brüchmann et al. 2022; Destatis 2023; Hövermann et al. 2015; Davidov et al. 2011; Fischer 2023; Löffler 2021; BMAS 2022; Skzcepanek 2021

FUTURE RESEARCH

- Interview study with homeless individuals on BI
- Interview study with bureaucrats and social workers
- Experimental study introducing BI in Germany like in London (Bregman 2018) and Denver (Westbrook 2023)

CONCLUSION

- BI effect on opportunities to prevent and exit homelessness depends on amount due to high living cost in metropolitan areas
- BI could relieve stigma and promote self-respect
- BI could increase power facing public institutions (vertical), but does not affect prejudice and violence (horizontal)

