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ABSTRACT

Debate around a universal basic income (UBI) tends to focus on the economic and social implications of the policy proposal. Less clear, however, are the factors influencing support for a UBI. Using the 2016 European Social Survey, we investigate how trade union membership and left political ideology (central to *power resources theory*) and attitudes towards immigrants' access to welfare benefits (central to *welfare state chauvinism*) affect individual support for a UBI. We also investigate how country-level differences in levels of social spending moderate individual-level UBI support. Results suggest that in countries where social spending is low, welfare state chauvinism and power resources theory have little effect in explaining support for a UBI. Where spending is high, chauvinism and power resources can explain individual-level support. These tensions form a demand-capacity paradox: countries which are presumably least equipped to implement a UBI see the most broad-based support for the policy.

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In the decade since the Great Recession, the issue of whether a universal basic income (UBI) can provide a guaranteed, basic living standard for all in society has increased in prominence in political and academic discourse. Proponents hold that UBI can provide a flexible protection against poverty and destitution in light of an increasingly fragmented labour markets and the threat of automation. Critics, meanwhile, consider the UBI economically inefficient or as posing a disincentive to work. However, less academic discussion has moved beyond the behavioural, economic and social consequences of UBI to instead consider the factors affecting support for it. An investigation into sources of support for UBI is necessary to further understand the political feasibility of the policy.

This paper analyses data from 23 countries within the 2016 European Social Survey to investigate the determinants of support for a UBI. Specifically, we study the relevance of three prominent theories in sociology and social policy literature on individual support for universal redistributive programs. These include *welfare chauvinism* and anti-immigrant sentiment; the *power resources theory* of welfare state development, emphasising leftist political power and trade union mobilisation; and *prevailing levels of welfare state development*. Given that welfare chauvinism is generally associated with lower support for broad redistributive policies, we investigate whether widespread chauvinist sentiment poses a barrier toward UBI implementation. The mobilization of trade union members and left-leaning voters, meanwhile, has been central to explanations of expansive welfare states in Western and Northern Europe. It remains unclear, however, if these core components of power resources theory also explain patterns of support for a UBI. Finally, the extent to which chauvinism, union membership, or political ideology are associated with support for a UBI might be conditional on political-institutional context at the national level. We investigate whether there is greater support for a UBI in countries with less developed welfare states. If so, welfare chauvinism and power resources theory may have less explanatory relevance in such countries.

The investigation of these hypotheses offers two primary sets of contributions to sociological research and political discussion regarding welfare state and UBI support. First, this study is unique in giving empirical weight to considerations of UBI at the *implementation* stage. Each country features different institutional configurations, policy constituencies and levels of welfare state development; this paper brings these differences into analytical focus to emphasise the diversity of experiences that countries would face if they were to attempt to garner support for a UBI. We demonstrate that the political debate on universal social assistance programs, and the UBI in particular, would benefit from further considering how prevailing heterogeneities of national welfare states shape the feasibility of such a policy being implemented in the first place. Indeed, one of this paper's key findings is the significant discrepancy between public *demand* for UBI and states' apparent *capacity* to deliver one.

A second contribution is the extension of the welfare chauvinism and power resources theories – two prominent framings of welfare state support in past sociological and social policy literatures – to cover the emergent UBI discussion. Our analytical framework evaluates these theories across diverse institutional contexts, ranging from the middle-income, low spending countries of Central Europe to the more egalitarian social democracies of Northern Europe. In doing so, we not only shed light on the politics of the UBI, but also on the transportability of power resources and welfare chauvinism across countries with different traditions of social spending. We show that prevailing levels of spending significantly moderate the effect of an individual's political ideology or chauvinist sentiments on support for a UBI. For example, our evidence suggests that an individual who holds welfare chauvinist sentiment or right-wing political ideology is less likely to support a UBI if living in a country with a robust welfare state, but is *not* less likely to support the UBI if living in a country with a smaller welfare state. This further emphasises the need for country-level consideration of the form and political feasibility of a possible UBI, and calls into question attempts by some proponents to describe UBI as a

natural next step of advanced welfare states. Instead, the UBI may be considered a policy measure more appropriate in contexts where existing social policies fail to deliver the policy outcomes desired by its recipient population.

BACKGROUND & THEORY

Conceptualizing a Universal Basic Income

The UBI has been proposed in various forms for centuries and has increased in prominence in recent decades. Prominent advocates have argued that UBI has the potential to fully ‘emancipate’ its recipients and allow them to pursue the life they desire unencumbered (cf. e.g. Van Parijs, 1991; 1992; Van Parijs and Vanderborght, 2017). Specific applications of UBI as a way of addressing social or economic problems include providing financial safety for citizens in an insecure and intermittent labour market without the risk of sanction (Standing, 2011), as a bulwark against mass automation of jobs (Sheahen, 2012; Hughes, 2014), and has caught the eye of Silicon Valley entrepreneurs as a way of letting people move more freely in the labour market (Freedman, 2016; Waters, 2017). Prominent, recurring objections include that a UBI high enough to ‘emancipate’ people would incur a prohibitive economic cost and concerns over work disincentives resulting in a reduction in the labour force and, as a result, the tax base financing the policy. Some studies have also noted the difficulties involved in the implementation of UBI and its maintenance at a sufficient level in the face of political adversity (e.g. De Wispelaere and Morales, 2016; De Wispelaere and Noguera, 2012).

In addition to the above it should be noted that the form of UBI being discussed varies significantly. At its most basic, the UBI takes the form of a cash transfer given on a regular basis to all citizens without the requirement of commensurate effort. However, many of the variables included in such a definition still require further definition – for instance how often the cash

transfer is given, whether a cash transfer is the appropriate mode of UBI to fulfil the policy's goals, or for that part who counts as a citizen¹. The *universality* of a UBI can depend on whether, like Van Parijs and Vanderborght (2017: 9), it is conceptualised as universal for all who are members of a 'particular, territorially defined community', or just as a 'participation income' for those who gainfully participate in society (Atkinson, 1996; 2015: 218-223). The *basic* nature of a UBI depends on its level of adequacy and whether it is envisioned as a complement to an existing system of social assistance or as a high enough income to fully prevent against poverty and allow the recipient to 'walk tall' and without interference in a society of equal citizens (e.g. Pettit, 2007: 173; 2013). Even the *income* can be called into question—for instance, existing schemes such as the Alaskan Permanent Fund Dividend gives an annual payment to Alaskan citizens based on the performance of its oil fund, rather than a fixed value of cash income (cf. Widerquist and Howard, 2012). Variation abound, but the definition used in the 2016 European Social Survey (ESS8), the data of which is used in this paper, provides a general starting point, defining UBI as an income (i) which the government pays everyone on a monthly basis to cover essential living costs, (ii) paid for by taxes, which (iii) replaces many other social benefits, (iv) the purpose of which is to guarantee everyone a minimum standard of living, (v) with the same amount received regardless of whether they are working and (vi) which allows people to keep the money earned from work or other sources. From here on, when UBI is discussed, it is this conceptualisation which is being referred to unless stated otherwise.

By using the ESS8 definition of UBI and eschewing philosophical discussion of the (de)merits of UBI, this paper can instead consider the under-discussed area of preferences and

¹ De Wispelaere and Stirton (2004) identify seven dimensions of variation across UBI proposals, namely the extent of *universality*, whether it is *individual* or household-based, *conditionality*, *uniformity* across recipient population, *frequency* of receipt, *modality* and the level of *adequacy* vis-à-vis the recipient's living costs.

support for UBI.² A rich previous literature exists on the preferences and attitudes towards redistributive and poverty-reducing social policy and for the welfare state itself. Ongoing policy debates on universal versus means-tested transfers (e.g. Korpi and Palme, 1998; Marx et al., 2016), and on behavioural requirements to access transfers (e.g. van Oorschot, 2006; Cantillon and Van Lancker, 2013) touch closely on the features of UBI: while its universal extension of a generous transfer without any prescriptions on behaviour is more extensive than most other social transfers, the individual features are found elsewhere. It is also subject to the same restrictions of support and institutional capacity as existing policies. Universal or not, it would still have to be implemented by a government or legislature and be distributed through institutions or channels within that state. Like any other policy, it would also require political support both to pass and to be maintained at a sufficient level rather than devaluated or redirected over time (De Wispelaere and Morales, 2016). Established theories of welfare state development and support can therefore help us begin to investigate the determinants of UBI support. Two prominent perspectives in studying political support are power resources theory and welfare chauvinism, and so we choose these as the starting point of the analysis. Additionally, we know from previous research that individual characteristics also shape political attitudes and support for policies. We consider the roles of these sets of variables in determining support for UBI, and further consider whether their role and effect varies by institutional context, and whether we thus can identify a path dependence effect in UBI support across countries.

² To our knowledge, the ESS8 data wave is the first large-*N*, international academic survey to directly pose a question on UBI, thus allowing for a comparative inquiry into the determinants of UBI support while controlling for a range of individual- and country-level variables. By contrast, many previous studies have been limited to one or a few countries (Andersen, 1996; e.g. Andersson and Kangas, 2005) or the result of smaller, *ad hoc* surveys.

Power Resources Theory

In the view of power resources theory, the conflict between capital owners and wage earners means that the development of expansive social policy is contingent on the mobilisation of wage-earners' and workers' power resources in the form of trade unions and organised political, generally social-democratic parties (e.g. Stephens, 1979; Korpi, 1983; 2006). The theory particularly identifies the Nordic, historically expansive welfare states as typical examples of a successful leveraging of this phenomenon. Trade unions and social-democratic parties are therefore, in at least some countries, actors whose support or lack thereof would be important if support for a UBI reform was to be amassed. Trade unions' support for or opposition to UBI may be a significant factor both in countries where they hold an institutional role as social partners in the policy-making process (Spohr, 2016), but also further afield: Western and Rosenfeld (2011) argue that strong trade unions can help institutionalise norms of wage equity and help in raising wages in both unionised and non-unionised jobs. Given that trade unions retain close links with social democratic parties in many countries where they have traditionally worked closely (Allern and Bale, 2017), their stance is also likely to affect the eventual positions taken by social democratic parties. Through investigating variables relating to power resources theory, in the form of left-wing political sentiment and membership of a trade union, we may thus be able to identify whether UBI is more likely to flourish as an idea in welfare states like the Nordics which have generally been considered as expansive and with high degrees of decommodification (Esping-Andersen, 1990; Scruggs and Allan, 2006; Arts and Gelissen, 2010), or whether such states on the contrary are less receptive to UBI. This can in turn give an indication on whether UBI is seen as a 'natural next step' for advanced welfare states, or if its promise on the contrary falls short of their expectations and finds more appeal in less advanced welfare states.

If its proponents arguments that UBI can decrease poverty, increase workers' bargaining power and raise living standards hold true, power resources theory would lead us to expect that trade unions and leftist parties would support the measure. However, there are also indications that the states with a strong labourist and social democratic tradition may be less likely to support UBI: social democrat parties and trade unions, with a few exceptions, have generally ranged from sceptical to hostile in their approach to the idea (Van Parijs and Vanderborght, 2017: 174-181, 198-194). UBI proponents have criticised social democratic parties for being wedded to outdated conceptions of full-time work and thus failing to stand up for the least privileged on the labour market (Standing, 2017). Social democratic-affiliated think tanks have meanwhile expressed scepticism at the idea, particularly critiquing a lack of agreement on a UBI design among its proponents (Harrop and Tait, 2017; Tönshoff et al., 2017) and the risk – in the absence of convincing critique of capitalism – of prolonging an exploitative economic system (Pitts et al., 2017).

As for trade unions, Vanderborght (2006) attributes their general opposition to the prominent role they play in social insurance-based systems and a disinclination to relinquish this position. He also hints at a potential insider-outsider conflict, whereby UBI has generally been advocated by independent claimants' organisations rather than the labour market 'insiders' with stable jobs who make up most of trade union membership (cf. Rueda, 2007; Martinelli, 2017: 69). The general scepticism of trade unions against UBI has come under some criticism. Van Parijs and Vanderborght (2017) note that despite general scepticism some trade unions have been more receptive to the idea of UBI, and further argue that a UBI could increase workers' bargaining power through removing the economic risk inherent from strikes or work stoppages. This latter point is reinforced by Pulkka (2017), who argues that a weakening of labour laws or collective bargaining is not inherent to the basic income argument, but rather dependent on the

specific economic environments. Where a UBI might increase the power of collective bargaining, a power resources argument would expect increased support from trade unions.

To investigate this, we consider two main variables: union membership and self-identification on a left-right political scale. The two variables take us in slightly different directions. Given the tension between trade unions' historical opposition to UBI and recent arguments that its implementation may strengthen workers' mobilisation, and uncertainty about the extent to which trade union leaderships' attitudes towards UBI match those of trade union members, we hypothesise no significant relationship between union membership and support for UBI. As for the second variable of political self-identification, we noted above the resistance of many social democratic parties or their affiliates to UBI. However, while centre-left social democrats and right-wing parties have been lukewarm in their interest or downright hostile, Green parties together with some socialist and liberal groupings have been more receptive (Van Parijs and Vanderborght, 2017: 193-203). On balance, we therefore predict that identifying as more left-wing is associated with higher support for UBI.

***Hypothesis 1:** Being a trade union member does not significantly influence support for UBI.*

***Hypothesis 2:** Politically identifying as left-wing is associated with higher support for UBI.*

Welfare Chauvinism

The increased prominence of right-wing populist parties in Europe³ – often, but not always against the background of large refugee movements in the 2000s and ongoing controversy over the desirability of labour's free movement – has increased academic interest in welfare

³ Careja et al. (2016) note the variety of specific political proposals, supporting coalitions and origin in this wider party family. However, as the paper is not concerned with individual parties' programmes, 'right-wing populist parties' will be used as shorthand for the party family for the remainder of the paper.

chauvinism, the phenomenon whereby welfare and policy preferences are ordered on national or ethnic lines. Conceptualised as a combination of strong support for economic redistribution and resistance against redistributing services toward immigrants and a preference toward directing welfare services to ‘our own’ (Andersen and Bjørklund, 1990), subsequent research has included the characteristics of right-wing populist parties’ support (Johnston et al., 2010; Wright and Reeskens, 2013; Halikiopoulou and Vlandas, 2016) and the variations in support and policy agendas in different countries (Reeskens and van Oorschot, 2012; Norocel, 2016). Recent discussion has considered whether there is a ‘new liberal dilemma’ facing welfare states, where welfare states which originally developed in homogenous societies face difficulties in sustaining support for developing or maintaining their welfare state in new, multicultural and more ethnically heterogeneous societies.

Welfare chauvinism’s most obvious link with UBI in its association with the dimension of universality: even in the most generous conceptions of UBI, a demarcation will have to be made between citizens and non-citizens, or at least recipients and non-recipients. Investigating the influence of welfare chauvinist sentiment on attitudes towards UBI is thus instructive in terms of illustrating whether a reluctance towards multiculturalism and immigration translates as a decreased willingness to implement a UBI, which in most conceptions would befall citizens regardless of ethnic origin provided that other criteria are fulfilled. As a result we expect that holding welfare chauvinist sentiment will be associated with lower support for UBI.⁴

Hypothesis 3: Welfare chauvinism leads to lower support for UBI

⁴ Such a correlation was previously identified by Bay and Pedersen (2006) in a study based on Norwegian survey data, which found that support for UBI decreased when respondents were exposed to statements expressing anti-immigrant sentiment.

Institutional Moderators of UBI Support

We then investigate whether the explanatory power of union membership, political ideology, and trade union sentiments is conditional on political-institutional context. Specifically, we consider whether prevailing levels of welfare state spending create a form of ‘path dependence’ in shaping individual attitudes toward support for a UBI. In Paul Pierson’s (2000; 2004) version of the theory, path dependence would entail a situation where groups or policy constituencies in a society consider themselves as benefitting from the status quo policies and so favour their continued operation. Implementing policies which deviate from the existing policy trajectory, or attempting to weaken policies which continue to enjoy strong support from large or influential policy constituencies, might come at a large political cost.⁵ This does not mean that drastic change is impossible: ‘path breaks’ may still occur where faith in old institutions have decreased sufficiently to allow for system reform (Ross, 2008), or where reformers exclude or delegitimise the policy constituencies or interest groups which stand in the way of reform (Spohr, 2016).

In the present case, UBI would entail a distinct departure from established policy patterns in most states (Van Parijs and Vanderborght, 2017: 2). While all factors involved in path dependence cannot be analysed here, we investigate how levels of social spending as percentage of GDP, a rough indicator of the expansiveness of a welfare state, moderate individual-level preferences toward a UBI.⁶ As a more expansive welfare state will likely have a wider array of policies in place it will also have a larger number of policy constituencies with an interest in maintaining these policies. We therefore expect that power resources theory and welfare state chauvinism hold more explanatory power in expansive welfare states, where more and diverse

⁵ For an example, see e.g. Knuth (2009) on how the Hartz-IV reforms of the German labour market weakened the two dominant SPD and CDU parties, and led to a faction of the former splitting into a new leftist party in the form of Die Linke.

⁶ While social spending alone does not capture the full picture of a welfare state, there remains a clear link between levels of social spending and the incidence of poverty (Nolan and Marx, 2009).

interest groups need to be considered prior to reform. Conversely, we expect that in less generous welfare states, power resources and chauvinism will hold less explanatory power, as the number of policy constituencies is likely to be smaller and less diverse in its interests and priorities:

***Hypothesis 4:** In less developed welfare states, power resources theory and welfare chauvinism are less consequential in explaining individual-level support for UBI.*

METHODS & DATA

We test our hypotheses using the 2016 version of the European Social Survey (ESS). This is the first version of the ESS to feature an explicit question on support for a universal basic income. The sample includes responses from 32,704 individuals across 23 countries. As described above, the ESS frames the question of UBI support in the following way: “The government pays everyone a monthly income to cover essential living costs. It replaces many other social benefits. The purpose is to guarantee everyone a minimum standard of living. Everyone receives the same amount regardless of whether or not they are working. People also keep the money they earn from work or other sources. This scheme is paid for by taxes. Overall, would you be against or in favour of having this scheme in [your country]?”

Survey participants select from a five-item scale to indicate whether they are “strongly in favour”, “in favour”, “not in favour”, “strongly in favour”, or “have no opinion” of the UBI. We recode respondents answers into a binary outcome variable which receives a value of one if the respondent supports or strongly supports a UBI, and takes a value of zero if the respondent does not support (or strongly does not support) a UBI.

Our individual-level explanatory variables of interest include an indicator of welfare chauvinism, union membership, and left ideology. We follow Van Der Waal et al. (2013) in measuring an individual’s level of welfare chauvinism based on his or her answer to the

following question: “Thinking of people coming to live in [country] from other countries, when do you think they should obtain the same rights to social benefits and services as citizens already living there?” Possible answers (and associated scores) are ranked from (1) “immediately upon arrival”, (2) “after living in [country] for a year, whether or not they have worked”, (3) “only after they have worked and paid taxes for at least a year”, (4) “once they have become a [country] citizen”, (5) “they should never get the same rights”.⁷

Union membership is a binary variable indicating whether the respondent is currently a member of a trade union. Finally, left-right ideology is measured on a 10-point scale, with a value of 5 indicating no political lean. We control for several other individual-level characteristics, including the respondents’ sex, education level, income decile, employment status, nationality, and subjective health status.

Our primary country-level variable is total spending as a share of national GDP. In robustness checks, we also estimate our findings with an alternative indicator of social spending: the level of ‘individual-level’ spending directed at household consumption of education, healthcare and other in-kind social transfers as percent of GDP (OECD, 2018). The robustness check produces no substantive changes to our primary findings.

We apply two approaches to our estimation strategy. In our primary analyses, we estimate logistic regression models using country fixed effects to estimate the association between individual-level characteristics and support for a UBI. The country fixed effects control for all country-level heterogeneity that might affect individual-level predictors of UBI support. We cluster our standard errors at the country level. When estimating the moderating role of country-

⁷ Van Der Waal et al. (2013) exclude the fourth response – “once they become a citizen” – from their analysis of welfare chauvinism, as it concerns legal status of immigrants and perhaps does not fit as well with the rest. They also opt to exclude all respondents with at least one parent not born in their country of residence. We opt to include respondents with foreign-born parents in our primary analysis, though excluding them does not substantially alter our findings.

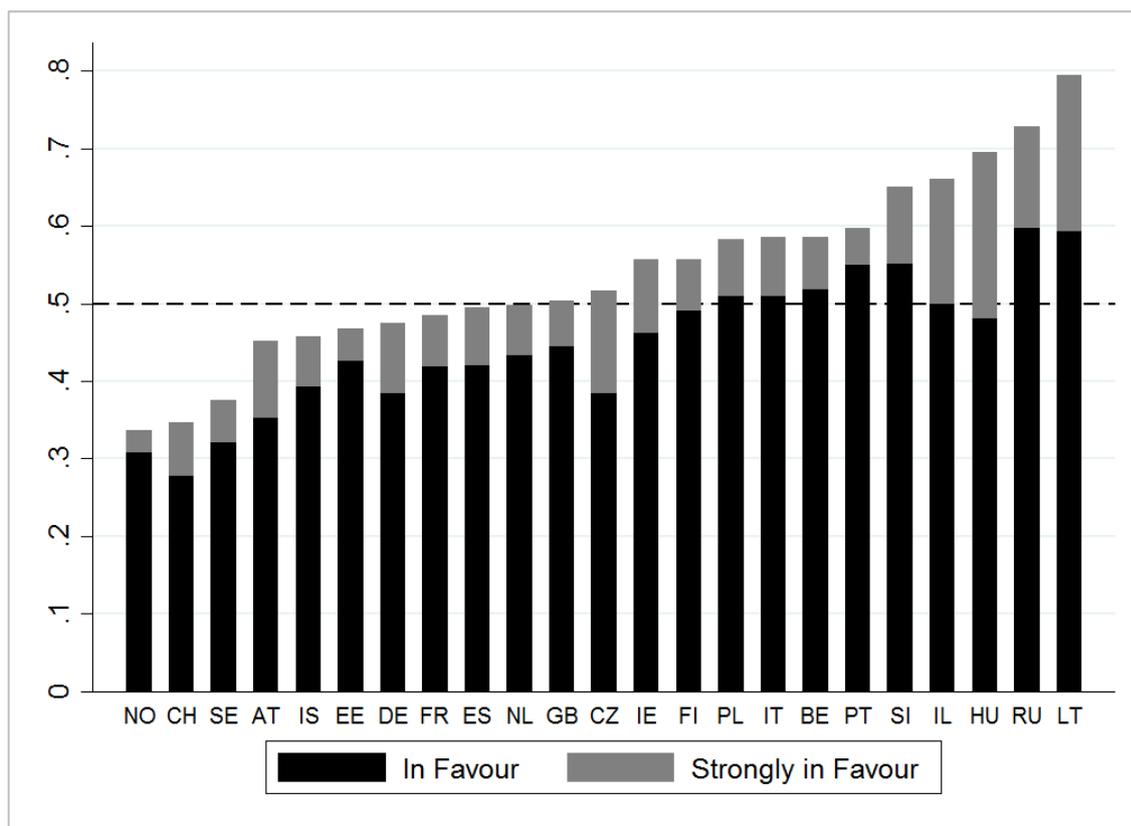
level factors, such as social spending, on individual-level predictors, we estimate cross-level interactions using country fixed effects, as recommended in Möhring (2012). We avoid the use of multi-level models in our primary analyses. Multi-level models allow for random effects at the country level; due to our relatively small second-level sample size (23 countries), however, the standard errors on our country-level estimates are prone to measurement error in the absence of a larger number of cases (Möhring, 2012). Moreover, random effects models in general open up greater potential for omitted variable bias relative to fixed effects estimations. That said, we do test our results using a multi-level random effects model as a sensitivity check; the findings are substantively similar to those of our primary analyses.

FINDINGS

Descriptive Findings

We first present descriptive findings on country-level support for a UBI. Figure 1 presents mean values of support across the 23 countries examined. Here, we separate and stack the share of respondents proclaiming to be “in favour” and “strongly in favour” of a UBI. Norway, Switzerland, and Sweden stand out as countries with the least level of support for a UBI. In either country, around a third of respondents indicated favourable attitudes toward a UBI. Conversely, more than two-thirds of respondents in Lithuania, Russia, Hungary, Israel, and Slovenia are in favour of a UBI.

Figure 1: Support for a Universal Basic Income by Country (2016)

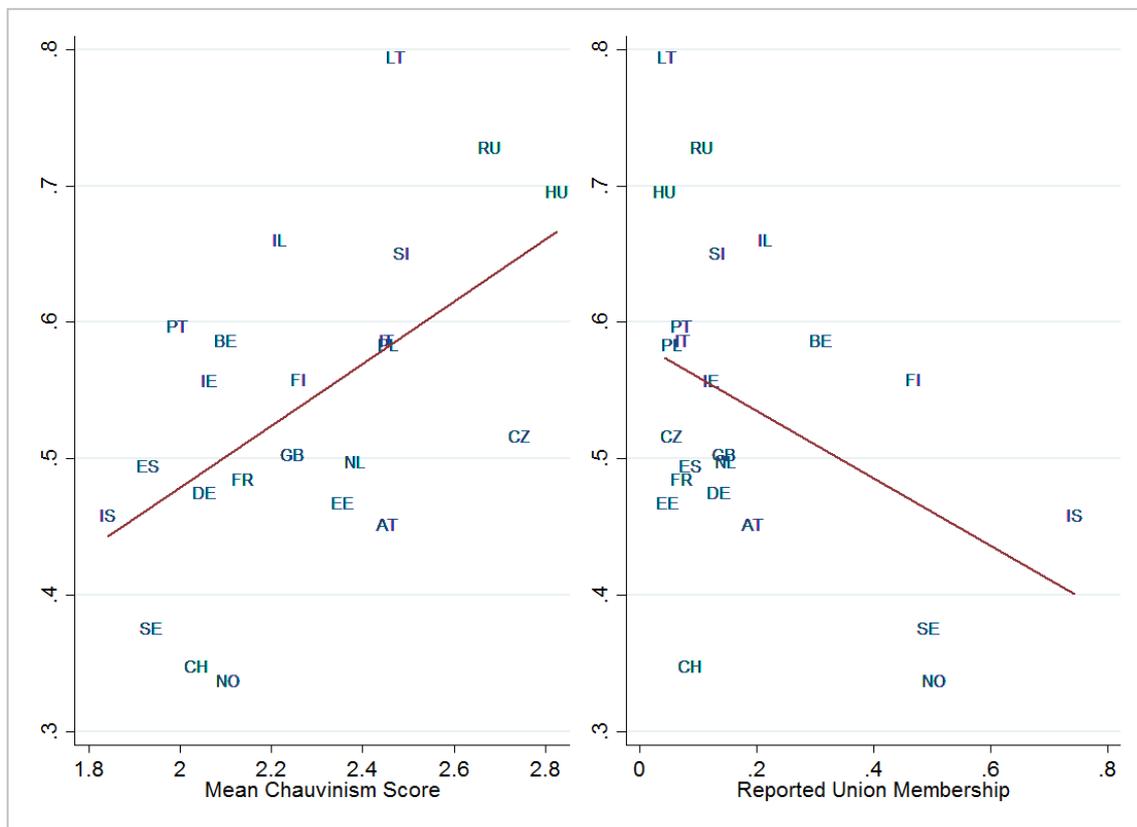


Note: Data from European Social Survey.

Figure 2 provides a first look at country-level associations between welfare chauvinism and UBI support, as well as union membership and UBI support. Here, UBI is coded as binary variable as described in the prior section, and all variables are measured as country-level means.⁸ The country-level associations stand in contrast to our expectations from prior literature on support for universal social policies. In the left-hand figure, for example, we see that countries with higher mean values of welfare chauvinism tend to be *more* in favour of a UBI. Russia provides the most extreme example of this pattern: despite being among the countries with highest levels of anti-immigrant resentment, it features the highest level of support for a UBI.

⁸ One might also be interested how support for a UBI overlaps with general attitudes toward greater redistribution. At the country and individual levels, we find, as expected, strong positive correlations between levels of support for a UBI and levels of support for more government redistribution.

Figure 2: Country-level bivariate relationships between support for basic income versus chauvinism (left) and reported union membership (right).



R= 0.49 for chauvinism and basic income support. R= -0.36 for union membership and basic income support. X-axis represents mean chauvinism (left) and mean union membership (right) within country.

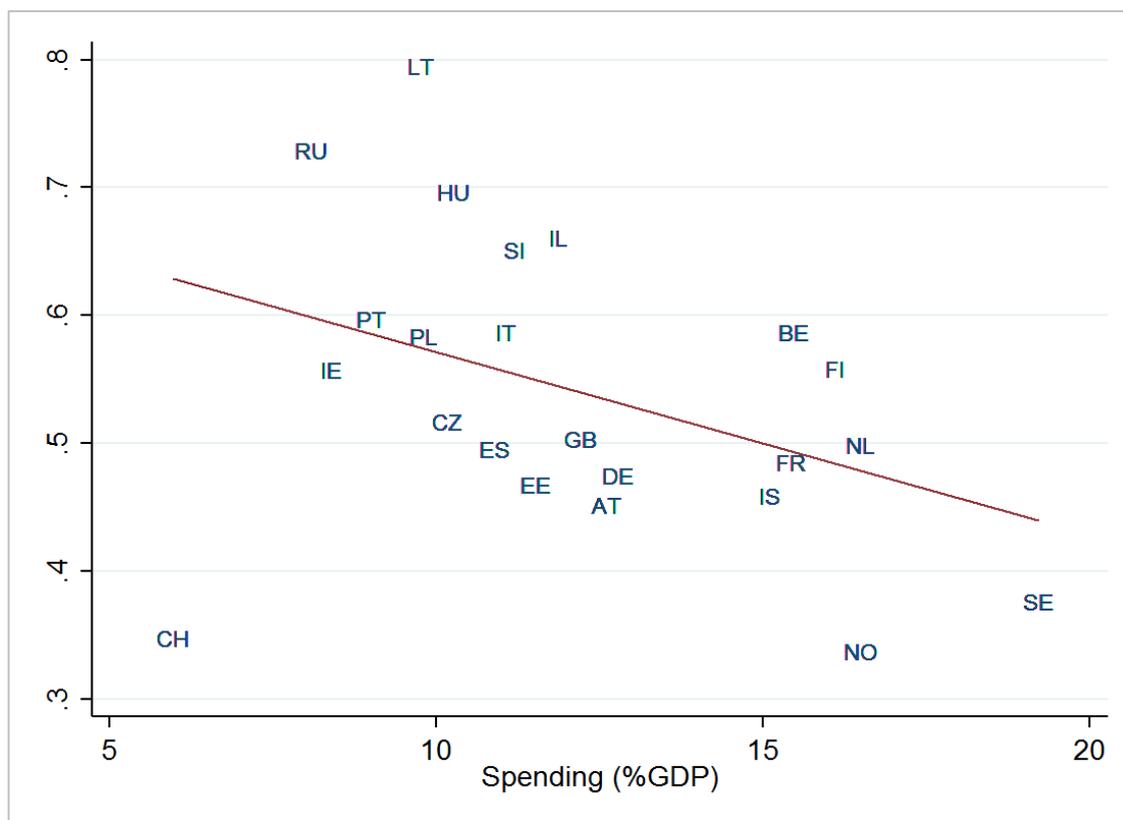
On the right-hand side, we see that higher mean values of reported union membership are associated with lower levels of support for a UBI. Again, this perhaps stands in contrast to expectations from the literature on power resources theory: though unions have been critical actors in the development of more generous social policies in the past, the initial evidence presented here suggests that they are not necessarily in favour of a UBI (as defined in the ESS).

Figure 3 now examines the country-level association between public spending and UBI support. Here, we see a clear pattern: countries with higher levels of social spending tend to have less support for a UBI (R=-0.4). The primary exception is Switzerland, a country with relatively little spending and low support for a UBI. Given that the Swiss have held a national referendum rejecting a proposed UBI, the political salience and personal sentiments toward the policy are

perhaps likely to be stronger and more negative relative to countries that have not casted a vote on the issue. If Switzerland is removed, the correlation grows stronger ($R=-0.6$).

Sweden and Russia again serve as opposing cases. Sweden features high levels of union membership (as shown in Figure 2), low levels of chauvinism, but high levels of social spending, each of which are associated (at the country level) with lower levels of support for a UBI. Russia, of course, is the opposite on each dimension. These patterns provide initial support for our primary hypothesis that national-level institutions, such as the size and strength of each country's prevailing welfare state, may be a more critical predictor of UBI support relative to individual-level traits of chauvinism, union membership, or ideology. To further test this claim, we now turn toward our individual-level estimations of support for a UBI.

Figure 3: Country-level bivariate relationships between support for basic income versus spending



Note: $R=-0.40$ with Switzerland included, or -0.61 without Switzerland. Data source: OECD and ESS.

Estimation Results

Table 1 presents the results from our initial logistic regression model predicting support for a UBI. In Model 1, we test only personal demographic features, while Model 2 adds information about household income, subjective health, education status, employment status, and household structure. Country fixed effects control for differences across the 17 nation-states.

In Model 1, we see that age is a particularly important predictor of support for a UBI. Relative to individuals between the age of 35 to 55 (the model's reference group), young people in the age of 15 to 24, in particular, are likely to support a UBI. Those between the age of 25 and 34 are also likelier than the reference group to express their support, albeit at a smaller magnitude than the age 15 to 25 group. Model 1 suggests that responses do not significantly vary by sex, and that racial or ethnic minorities are slightly likelier than non-minorities to support a UBI.

After adding the additional personal and household characteristics in Model 2, however, we find no significant effect of being a minority. Persons below the age of 34 meanwhile, are still likelier to support a UBI. Employment and household income status stand out as particularly consequential predictors of individual support for UBI; this is unsurprising, given a rich history of literature attaching personal economic wellbeing to support for redistributive policies.

Table 1: Logit Estimation of Support for a Universal Basic Income: Individual & Household Characteristics

	Model 1	Model 2
Age 15 to 24	0.40*** (6.52)	0.31*** (3.38)
Age 25 to 34	0.23*** (4.41)	0.20*** (4.02)
Age 55 to 65	-0.10 (-1.47)	-0.11 (-1.45)
Age 66+	-0.0021 (-0.06)	-0.040 (-0.79)
Female	0.0081 (0.19)	-0.0091 (-0.21)
Minority Race/Ethnicity	0.19*** (4.08)	0.13 (1.91)
Household Income		-0.053** (-3.19)
Low Subjective Health		-0.029 (-1.27)
Low Education		0.10** (2.95)
High Education		0.089 (1.83)
Unemployed		0.28** (3.10)
Self-Employed		-0.010 (-0.20)
Household Size		0.044 (1.89)
Child in HH		-0.055 (-0.88)
Country Fixed Effects	X	X
Observations	32,704	32,704

Table 2: Logit Estimation of Support for a Universal Basic Income: Power Resources & Welfare Chauvinism

	(1)	(2)
Left Ideology	0.068* (2.53)	0.066* (2.29)
Union Member	-0.066 (-1.45)	-0.24** (-2.77)
Chauvinism	-0.13*** (-9.42)	
Union Member # Left Ideology		0.035** (2.48)
Individual Controls	X	X
Household Controls	X	X
Country Fixed Effects	X	X
Observations	30,769	30,769

t statistics in parentheses

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table 2 shows the results of our expanded models, which include the variables identifying a respondent's political ideology, union membership, and chauvinism score. We still include all the individual and household controls from Table 1. In Model 1, we see that left ideology is, indeed, associated with greater support for a UBI. Interestingly, however, union membership is negatively signed and statistically insignificant. In Model 2, we add an interaction term on union membership and left ideology to assess whether a union member's political lean intensifies the likelihood that he or she will support a UBI. The interaction term is positive and significant, suggesting that union members with left ideology are particularly likely to support a UBI, relative to the non-union left or to the unionized right. The main effect of union membership (interpreted here as union membership among individuals with right-wing political ideology) is negative and significant. These findings suggest, first, that power resources theory is insufficient in explaining support for a UBI. Though labour unions been instrumental toward the development of more robust welfare states across the European Union, we do not find that the average union member supports the replacement of current social programs with a universal and unconditional cash benefit. Second, the findings suggest that ideology *within* labour unions deserves attention in

understanding the relationship of organized labour and support for a UBI. While the average union member might not support a UBI, the average union member with left ideology appears to do so.

In Model 1, we also find that welfare chauvinism is associated with lower support for a UBI. While this matches our expectations and supports our second hypothesis, it also partially contradicts the country-level patterns we observed in Figure 2. At the country level, higher mean chauvinism values were associated with *higher* support for a UBI. In Figure 3, meanwhile, we observed a strong negative relationship between a country's level of social spending and support for a UBI. We expect that one source of the contradiction between the country-level and individual-level chauvinism effects relates to these national-level differences in social spending. As we proposed in our fourth hypothesis, we expect that the relative size of national welfare states will have a strong moderating effect on individual determinants of support toward a UBI. If so, we should see in a cross-level interaction that lower social spending *reduces* the negative relationship of an individual's chauvinism score and his/her support for a UBI. We can also test this relationship with other individual-level characteristics from Tables 1 and 2 that were associated with higher (or lower) support for a UBI.

Table 3 presents the results from the cross-level interaction models. As described in the prior section, we follow Möhring (2012) in estimating cross-level interactions with country fixed effects. Model 1 estimates the moderating effect of country-level social spending on the relationship between welfare chauvinism and UBI support. As hypothesized, the relationship is negative and significant. This indicates that in countries with *higher* levels of social spending (more robust welfare states), scoring higher on welfare chauvinism *increases* the likelihood that the individual will not support a UBI. But in countries with *lower* levels of social spending, welfare chauvinism is a less relevant predictor of UBI support. Instead, the size of the prevailing welfare states appears to, on average, trump concerns of immigrants' access to a UBI.

Table 3: Logit Estimation of Support for a Universal Basic Income: Moderating Effects of Macroeconomic Indicators

	M1	M2	M3	M4
Left Ideology	0.067* (2.46)	0.069*** (4.13)	0.068* (2.51)	0.068*** (3.98)
Union Member	-0.067 (-1.49)	-0.079 (-1.69)	-0.078 (-1.85)	-0.088* (-2.22)
Chauvinism	-0.13*** (-7.17)	-0.12*** (-8.40)	-0.13*** (-9.41)	-0.12*** (-9.10)
Spending as %GDP	-1.78*** (-29.84)	-2.23*** (-27.47)	-1.91*** (-61.51)	-2.16*** (-19.27)
Chauvinism # Spending	-0.047** (-2.85)			-0.031* (-2.14)
Left Ideology # Spending		0.066*** (4.33)		0.064*** (4.10)
Union Member # Spending			0.080* (2.31)	0.065 (1.80)
Individual Controls	X	X	X	X
Household Controls	X	X	X	X
Country Fixed Eff.	X	X	X	X
Observations	28,919	28,919	28,919	30,038

t statistics in parentheses

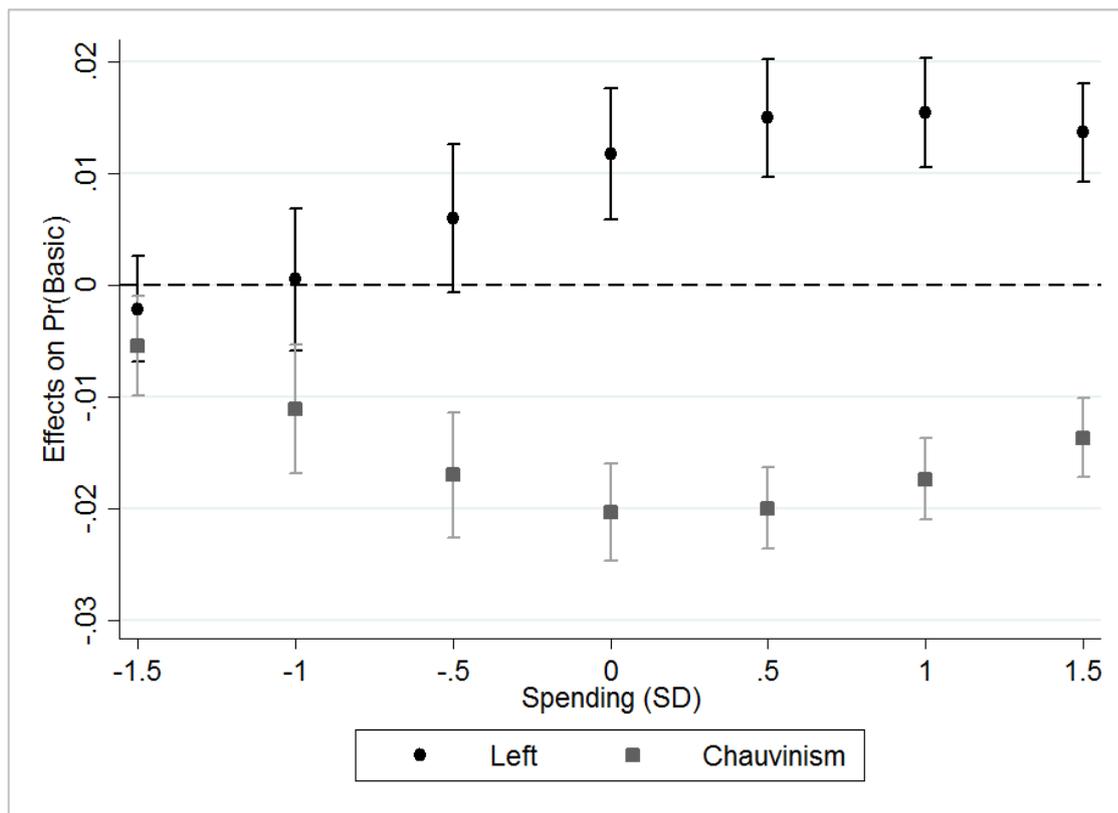
* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Model 2 performs a similar cross-level interaction, but with left ideology. Again, our findings point to the significance of national institutions in explaining UBI support: the positive and significant interaction suggests that in countries with smaller welfare states, left ideology is a less relevant explainer in UBI support. Conversely, left ideology is a stronger predictor of UBI support in countries where social spending is higher. And in Model 3, we see the same patterns exist with respect to union membership (though this relationship fades in our final model, which includes each of the interaction terms in the same estimation).

Finally, Model 4 includes each of the interactions into a single model. The moderating role of social spending remains significant in mitigating the predictive effect of welfare chauvinism and left ideology on support for a universal basic income.

To better understand the magnitude of the effects presented in Table 3, we present the marginal effects of left ideology and chauvinism on support for a UBI by levels of national spending. Figure 4 depicts how the relative explanatory power of ideology and chauvinism vary across context. Levels of spending are standardized, with -1.5 SD from the mean roughly reflecting levels of spending in Russia, while 1.5 SD on the right side of the figure roughly reflect levels of spending in Sweden.

Figure 4: Marginal Effects of Left Ideology & Chauvinism on Support for Basic Income by Level of Spending



Note: Marginal effects derived from Table 3, Model 4. Levels of spending are standardized, with -1.5 SD from the mean roughly reflecting levels of spending in Russia, while 1.5 SD reflecting levels of spending in Sweden.

Looking at the left side of Figure 4, we see that left ideology is statistically insignificant (its confidence interval crosses zero) in explaining support for a UBI where spending is 0.5 standard deviations or more below the mean. In other words, there appears to be greater consensus across political ideology in support for a UBI in countries like Russia, Lithuania, Hungary, where a small welfare state exists. Conversely, political ideology matters more in countries with spending levels at the mean or higher. With respect to chauvinism, we see a similar pattern: at Russian levels of spending (-1.5 SD below the mean), holding chauvinist sentiments only reduces support for a UBI by about half a percent. As the figure shows, this is much smaller than the estimated effect in countries with mean levels of spending or higher. In countries with low levels of social spending, then, we find that chauvinism and power resources theory carry little explanatory power with respect to support for a UBI.

DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

This paper investigated predictors for support of UBI based on two welfare state theories, welfare chauvinism and power resources theory. In doing so it contributes to the literature on the politics of UBI rather than the discussion of economic or moral trade-offs, while also linking the discussion with established welfare state theories. Our results point to three primary takeaways relating to public support for a universal basic income.

First, we highlight the significance of the relationship between levels of social spending at the country level and support for a UBI. We identify this relationship as a *demand-capacity paradox*: countries with the greatest demand for a universal basic income are the countries with the least institutional capacity to implement a generous, unconditional, and universal cash assistance program. Of course, the presence of a small welfare state is generally endogenous to greater levels of inequality, higher levels of poverty, and lower subjective wellbeing (Cantillon

and Vandenbroucke, 2015; Marx et al., 2015). Further, previous research has indicated that in countries with little poverty and low inequality, both workers and those in the service class are more able to make a clear cognitive link between their own values and the desirability of specific policies (Kulin and Svallfors, 2013). Thus, in a higher-spending welfare state the population may be more aware of how specific policies affect and benefit them, leading to stronger reaction against their possible replacement by UBI. The precise mechanisms affecting support for a UBI likely run through the entanglement of each of these factors. As the size of the welfare state largely shapes the social conditions, however, we can straightforwardly claim that it is the countries that tend to do *less* to address concerns of poverty and inequality where demand for UBI is greatest.

Second, the influence of welfare chauvinism differs between the individual and country level. Individually, we find welfare chauvinist sentiment to be associated with lower support for UBI. However, this is not sufficient to explain patterns of support for UBI: as shown in Figure 2, we also find that when the mean welfare chauvinism score across the population is studied, more chauvinist countries are *more* likely to support UBI. In accordance with our hypothesis that the size of the national welfare states will moderate the influence of individual-level variables, our cross-level model in Table 3 shows a negative and significant moderating influence on the relationship between individual chauvinism scores and UBI support. In other words, where individuals find themselves in a more expansive welfare state, holding welfare chauvinist sentiment increases the likelihood that they are also opposed to UBI, while in lower-spending states it is less significant as a predictor. This is consistent with previous research indicating that low-inequality countries traditionally placed in the ‘social democratic’ welfare regime see higher support for extending welfare entitlement to immigrants than in the conservative and liberal welfare regimes, where inequality is higher (Van Der Waal et al., 2013). Further, populist right-wing parties in the Nordic countries have tended towards a nostalgic view of the welfare state of

the past (Nordensvard and Ketola, 2015; Norocel, 2016). This may in part explain their reluctance toward a newer policy like UBI which would both break with tradition and extend entitlement to the non-native population. However, the moderating effect of social spending seems to reinforce the demand-capacity paradox identified above: in states with lower social spending, possible concerns of UBI benefitting ‘outsiders’ and not just the native population appear to be superseded by appeal for an expansive welfare reform in the shape of UBI. It is also in accordance with our path dependence argument, as a more expansive welfare state would see more policy constituencies committed to retaining their benefits. Nevertheless, future research should look closer into the link between welfare chauvinist sentiment and support for UBI, specifically in light of the different prevalence and ideological profile of the tendency.

Finally, we find that left ideology is associated with higher support for UBI, while trade union membership has a negative, non-statistically significant relationship. The exception is left-wing trade union members, where we find a positive and significant relationship with support for UBI. Our cross-level model also shows that left-wingers are more likely to favour UBI in welfare states with high spending, whereas the idea is less influenced by self-defined political identification in lower-spending countries. The reasons for trade union opposition is likely to vary depending on national context – for instance, on a European level the Nordic trade unions are still more likely to advocate dialogue and bargaining while some continental unions have preferred to advocate for increased activism (Mitchell, 2014). Considering trade unions in isolation from their political context and traditional means of organisation risks a failure to identify differences in their tactics and preferred political outcomes: the likelihood of trade unions in Europe taking on more radical policy agendas is influenced by their political and institutional history, and the extent to which they retain strong links with mainstream social democratic parties (Taylor et al., 2011; Allern and Bale, 2017). Investigating this link presents a relevant area of future research. It may also be worth considering whether there is a discrepancy

between trade union leaderships, which may be more wedded to long-term strategizing, and its membership, which may more urgently feel the effects of economic and social pressures. Where such discrepancy exists, trade union leaders are less likely to be successful in their chosen strategy or policy position (Bacon and Blyton, 2004). Trade unions remain important stakeholders in many welfare states and their ideological direction and divisions may influence the role they play in either preventing or encouraging a further discussion of UBI.

A few caveats should be noted. Despite the quality of the ESS data set, the posed UBI question is rather general. For instance, while characteristics described include that the scheme will be tax-funded and replace some existing benefits, no specific benefits are defined. This leaves some room for interpretation on behalf of the respondent, and if the schemes they envision will be subsumed into a UBI do not leave them worse off, they may be more likely to indicate support for the scheme. It is also difficult to control for factors such as different countries' uneven exposure to the policy, e.g. in the form of experiments in the Netherlands and Finland, or the 2016 referendum on UBI in Switzerland. Finally, it is possible that some portion of those that voice support for a UBI consider it a long-term, utopian ideal rather than a practical policy which they envision in the foreseeable future. To further investigate UBI support while taking the above limitations into account, future research would benefit from considering case studies of individual countries and taking into account political culture, ideological divisions and previous exposure to UBI. When data is available, future research would also benefit from investigating support beyond a single-year cross-section, and compare support for different, more explicitly-worded UBI proposals.

Finally, more specificity regarding geography and popular support may be beneficial in reaching new insights regarding its viability and desirability. This paper has illustrated that opinions of UBI differ significantly between countries. While the philosophical aspect of UBI is important, obstacles relating to political economy and institutional factors will shape whether

the scheme is ever to be implemented. For proponents, it may be concerning that richer countries with expansive welfare state which are likely to be more economically and institutionally able to implement a UBI show the lowest enthusiasm. However, such insight can also help target efforts at contexts where UBI can both be shown to be beneficial *and* may find a founding policy constituency in favour of the idea. If enthusiasm is higher in lower-spending welfare states with lower coverage, it is possible that UBI's role, rather than being the next logical step for advanced welfare states, is as a possible route of starting to build a more expansive welfare state by increasing minimum income protection coverage. UBI's potential as a policy tool for developing welfare states therefore forms another possible venue for future research to consider.

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