Realizing the Basic Income;

the promotion of transformative knowings through competing claims to expertise[1]

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Abstract

Current initiatives of social innovation bring forward new ways of doing and organizing, but transformative knowings as well. Their efforts towards the realization of those are important sites for the investigation of contemporary tensions of expertise. The promotion of transformative knowings typically involves a large bandwidth of claims to expertise. The attendant contestation is unfolded through the exemplar case of the Basic Income, in which the historically evolved forms of academic advocacy are increasingly accompanied by a new wave of activism. The crowd-funding initiatives, internet activists, citizen labs and petitions for referenda seek to realize the BI through different claims to expertise. Observing both the competition between the diverse claims to expertise and the overall co-production process through which the Basic Income is realized, this contribution concludes with reflections on the politics of expertise involved with transformative social innovation.

Key words: Expertise, basic income, contestation

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1 Introduction: social innovation through transformative knowings

As prevailing institutional structures are widely seen to fall short regarding persistent societal challenges such as sustainable development, social inclusion and well-being, a broad variety of initiatives can be witnessed that pursue societal transformations through social innovation (Moulaert et al. 2013; AUTHOR forthcoming 2017a; Klein et al. 2016). Transformative social innovation (TSI) involves the promotion of radically new ways of doing and organizing, often undertaken in the form of concrete and locally-based alternative socio-material practices such as Ecovillages, Hackerspaces or Timebanks. Even if concrete tinkering with and realization of alternative doing and organizing is typical for the repertoires of these initiatives, the dissemination of new knowings is a no less important dimension of such transformative agency (AUTHOR 2016a). This becomes evident through the considerable efforts that these collectives invest in the construction of persuasive narratives of change (e.g. 'Slow Food') to enrol others into their proposals for new social relations (AUTHOR 2015a).

This contribution unfolds how these practices of social innovation, and the associated promotion of transformative knowings, are important sites of research at which contemporary tensions of expertise manifest particularly strongly: First, transformative knowings challenge dominant institutions and hegemonic ideas (Riddell & Moore 2015). Well-known initiatives like Sharing Economy (Frenken & Schor 2016), Science shops (Leyesdorff & Ward 2005) and the antipsychiatry movement (Crossley 1999) promote transformative knowings that purposively shake the fences between established and 'lay' expertise (Wynne 1996). Second, they tend to contain alternative ways of 'knowing governance' (Voß & Freeman 2016: 2), carrying representations of desirable social relations and renewed modes of governance (Swyngedouw 2005; Scott-Cato and Hillier 2011). Third, the transformative knowings form parts of social innovation processes which as emergent not-yet realities tend to elude truth claims by established expertise (Michael 2016). Our Basic Income (BI) case study exemplifies the difficulty to claim expertise on a transformation that has largely remained an unrealized utopia.

The BI example shows how it is both important and difficult for radical social innovation initiatives to gain acceptance of their transformative knowings. Commonly defined as an unconditional, individual, universal and more or less sufficient income entitlement to all citizens (Van Parijs 1995), the BI is a utopian proposal that has gained traction as a scientifically elaborated model for social security. Although it has as yet gained only very moderate political authority, it has been partially implemented in contexts such as Alaska, Iran, Brazil and the Netherlands (Van Parijs 2013: 175; Widerquist & Howard 2012). The further 'realization' of the BI, which we understand following Voß (2014: 318-319) as the 'joint process of coming to know and making existent' will crucially require the 'mutually supportive acquisition of scientific and political authority'. This interpretive framework usefully underlines how the

acceptability of and expertise on transformative knowings emerge through processes of co-production (Jasanoff 2004), and how the BI concept can become known, acknowledged and enacted in a broad variety of ways and in various social worlds (Star & Griesemer 1989).

Our analysis of the BI and the Basic Income Earth Network (BIEN, Cf. BIEN 2017) unfolds how the promotion of transformative knowings involves a large bandwidth of often conflicting claims to expertise. Throughout the strikingly diverse constructions of expertise as they have emerged over the course of BI advocacy, we see particularly sophisticated attempts at 'speaking truth to power' (Wildavsky 1979). Evidence from recent Dutch, German, Swiss, Canadian and transnational BI activism suggests that earlier forms of advocacy are becoming accompanied by what appears to be a new wave of 'realization' strategies. Even if generally agreeing on the deficiencies of current welfare arrangements and the kinds of transformations needed, the more recently emerging crowd-funding initiatives, internet activists, citizen labs and civic petitions seek to realize the BI through constructions of expertise that seem to imply a break from earlier ones. Our empirical analysis is guided by the following questions: *How are the transformative knowings of social innovation realized? Which claims to and contestations of expertise are involved in the apparent 'waves' of Basic Income activism, and how do they co-produce the realization of transformative knowings? And what are the broader implications of the observed tensions in expertise for transformative social innovation?*

Our analysis proceeds as follows. After a brief systematic exposition of BI advocacy across time **(section 2)**, we invoke insights on the co-production of science and society to clarify the various claims to expertise implied with the 'realization' of the BI **(section 3)**. A brief methodological section accounts for the empirical data and case study construction through which we enact a 'fourth wave' in B I advocacy **(section 4)**. Next, we investigate the different claims to expertise involved with three earlier waves in BI advocacy **(section 5)** and the newly emerging fourth wave **(section 6)**. Eliciting the tensions, continuities and co-productive feedbacks between these 'realization' waves in a synthesis, we conclude by considering broader implications for transformative social innovation **(section 7)**.

2   The Basic Income as social innovation and transformative knowing

As introduced, the BI is promoted through different kinds of claims to expertise. Before going into the different waves of 'realization' strategies, the following account provides a brief clarification of the historical emergence of the BI as a socially innovative and transformative way of knowing.

The BI in its bare form amounts to a state-provided entitlement of all citizens to an unconditional income that more or less covers subsistence. The concept dates back to the publication of Thomas More's 'Utopia' in 1516. Two centuries later, the pamphlet 'Agrarian Justice' by Thomas Paine (1795) further developed the idea of unconditional payments as 'a right and not a charity' to everyone. Numerous variations have been formulated, tested or even implemented since (e.g. a minimum income, a negative income tax, a demogrant, a social dividend, or conditional social benefits (Cf. Ackerman et al. 2006; Blaschke 2012). Amongst the eminent BI advocates feature Charles Fourier, John Stuart Mill, Martin Luther King Jr., Bertrand Russell, Friedrich Hayek and Milton Friedman. The most elaborate exposition of the concept has been provided in 'Real Freedom for All' by Belgian political theorist Philippe Van Parijs (1997). He argues that a BI fits better with principles of social justice than existing institutional models. The arrangement thus serves 'real' (Van Parijs 1997) freedom, supporting individuals in shaping their lives in accordance with their own ambitions and talents.

The BI is at once a very simple idea and a proposal with many faces and implications (de Wispelaere & Stirton 2004). Each of the four defining criteria has evoked contestations: universality through debates on citizenship, unconditionality through debates on libertarian principles and on social and distributive justice, and sufficiency through debates on democracy and a universal right to basic subsistence and social participation. The latter criterion in particular divides BI proponents: is it self-determination or social justice that is the ultimate justification for a BI?

The BI can be considered an example of social innovation and transformative knowing in several respects. The element that is most frontally aiming for a replacement of dominant institutions (AUTHOR forthcoming 2017a) is the principle of unconditional income. Ideologically, it violates the well-established moral principle that one should 'earn one's income'. This socially innovative concept also challenges multiple, institutionalized social relations: between benefits claimants and their principals, between unemployed and employed, between employer and employee. Furthermore, as an individual income entitlement, it fundamentally re-constitutes relations between (breadwinning and caring) individuals in households, and the attenuation of work obligations could become an element in economic 'de-growth' (Schneider et al.2010).

Evidently, the above transformations in society presuppose major and particularly wide-ranging administrative reforms - especially if a full-fledged and truly universal BI arrangement is to be institutionalized. One major challenge alone will be the phasing out of the bureaucratic apparatuses currently geared to manage the workfare policies through means testing, employability programs and compliance control. Moreover, the reforms would not only impact the administration of unemployment benefits, but also various other welfare schemes targeting specific groups, as well as the tax system through which to finance the BI. Meanwhile, the labour market would transform in largely unknown ways, with individuals empowered to deploy their time and talents more freely with possible implications for productivity.

In light of these enormous political-economic transformations, the BI suggests a utopia for which there is no place. Countering that it is 'more than a Pipe Dream', Van Parijs (2013:175) points out the Alaska Permanent Fund and the Iranian cash benefits based on oil revenues. The Brazilian Bolsa Família is another well-known BI-inspired policy scheme. Furthermore, various BI experiments (Widerquist 2002; Forget 2008) and policy proposals (Groot & van der Veen 2001; Häni & Kovce 2015; Standing 2014) testify that the BI has become a real policy option, and that significance advancements in agenda-setting have been made. Notwithstanding these achievements, a full-fledged implementation of the BI has until today remained a utopia yet to be realized. In the next section we develop an analytical framework through which to investigate the competing claims to expertise in attempts towards BI realization.

3   Realizing the BI through claims to expertise

The above account of BI utopianism has sketched a discursive maze that has materialized in several proposals, some experiments and very few policy arrangements. Whether one is familiar with the political-economic details of the BI proposals or not, at least the uphill struggle that BI advocates are faced with is easy to relate to. Their efforts to bring the BI concept into practice involve the regular frictions that transformation-oriented initiatives towards social innovation have with dominant ways of doing, organizing, framing and knowing (AUTHOR 2016a). Just like the promoters of Timebanks, Ecovillages, seed exchange networks or Science Shops, BI promoters are advocating new social relations that challenge what is held to be normal, and as such their proposals meet with a less than receptive selection environment (Smith & Raven 2012). The predicament for BI promoters is significantly more difficult, however, as their commitment to a *universal* basic income entitlement precludes the resort to small-scale experimentation and self-organized action. Other than is usual for transformative social innovation initiatives (AUTHOR forthcoming 2017b), the BI requires state intervention for it to become real. BI promoters therefore engage in 'real utopianism' (Van Parijs 2013; Olin Wright 2013): next to making persuasive moral appeals and interrogating hegemonic societal structures, many BI advocates consider expertise as the key working substance of their activism.

Aiming for knowledge that persuades into political action, BI advocates exemplify how expertise is relational and performative (Evans & Collins 2008: 609/610). However strong their commitments to sound arguments and substantive expertise, their claims to expertise serve to upgrade utopian ideas into realistic policy options. Their expertise constructions can therefore be described as efforts towards the 'realization' of the BI, a term coined by Voß (2014: 318-319) to describe a 'joint process of coming to know and making existent'.

As a category of performative knowledge production, the 'realization' concept helps to elicit several tensions of expertise that underlie the societal BI debate. First, as Voß substantiates in relation to the rise of 'transition management', the 'realization' concept usefully articulates the kind of self-propelling dynamics hoped for by many BI activists. Realizing the BI occurs through feedbacks in societal expertise construction, namely the 'mutually supportive acquisition of scientific and political authority'. These feedbacks help to understand how 'transition management' gained societal presence, arguably more than the BI. Crucially, the 'realization' framework raises attention to the stepping stones, intermediate results and 'boundary objects' (Star & Griesemer 1989) through which scientific and political agenda-setting inform and reinforce each other – or to the possible lack thereof. The framework does not side against those failing to have their knowings realized, however. Importantly, it is sensitive to the fragile existence of the BI, allowing to articulate how it is already more than 'just an idea'.

Second, the 'realization' concept situates BI promotion in a co-productionist framework. In line with the co-production of science and social order (Jasanoff 2004), the acquisition of epistemic and political authority is portrayed as a process of continuous interactions and feedback loops between interested parties that draw on BI discourse and thereby make it a reality. These interactions typically occur through crystallized forms of knowledge such as documents, metaphors, classification systems, metrics - or in casu, macro-economic calculations (Voß 2014: 323). An attentiveness to co-production usefully foregrounds the different kinds of expertise construction implied with BI advocacy, diversifying the still common picture in which expertise is held by incumbents to control the lives of subaltern actors (Prince 2010: 875). So while the dual attention to scientific and political authority is in itself helpful, the focus on feedbacks between them is particularly helpful in illuminating the role of planning bureaus, advisory boards, or accounting systems that co-perform (Callon 2009) the policies of full employment and 'workfare' that are currently realized - instead of the BI. The 'realization' concept raises attention to the widely distributed agency through which the governmentalities of 'income through wage' are reproduced (Rose et al. 2006).

Third, the 'realization' lens seems suitable to clarify how BI advocates engage in 'evidence-based activism', moving from critical outsiders to experts that act 'from within'(Rabeharisoa et al. 2014). The perspective is likely to tease out how the real-utopian project rests on forms of 'lay expertise' (Wynne 1996) and alternative knowings, but also on counter-expertise that wholeheartedly joins into the game of expertocracy and rather perpetuates 'the over-reliance on science in decision-making' (Evans & Collins 2008: 611). Even if 'evidence-based activism' may be a fitting label in some respects, the 'realization' framework reminds however that BI advocacy is quite different from the classical examples of patient organizations (Epstein 1995; Rabeharisoa et al. 2014). The 'realization view' underlines that the BI is instead a 'knowing of governance', carrying 'representations of desirable social relations and renewed modes of governance' (Voß & Freeman 2016: 2). This is relevant, as the BI claims to expertise run against particularly deep-rooted ways of knowing governance,

and especially of the knowing that social security can only work when entitlements are conditional. Approaching the BI as a highly transformative, counter-intuitive way of knowing governance, it also becomes more apparent how its advocacy displays similarities with the otherwise so different expertise of the antipsychiatry movement (Crossley 1999) or the anarchistic approach to traffic of Shared Space (AUTHOR 2016c): societal actors will also have to *believe* that release of control can work.

Fourth, it seems pertinent to consider the organizational capacities, knowledge infrastructures, and communication resources through which BI advocates enter and possibly accelerate the realization process. These social-material conditions have changed since the inception of BIEN in 1986. The internet as 'knowledge infrastructure' forms the backbone of social interactions that re-configure scientific and transdisciplinary collaboration (Gläser 2003). It blurs the boundaries between knowledge and information (Dagiral & Peerbaye 2016), empowers the marginalised (Jalbert 2016) and democratises scientific controversy and knowledge production (while maintaining some access-based boundaries) (Wyatt et al. 2016). As pointed out by Ezrahi (2004), the material-communicative conditions for claims to expertise have undergone a 'transition from information to out-formation' – eroding the ground for scientific legitimizations of policy proposals in favour of less rigorously and transparently produced claims, but also opening up societal debates that were previously confined to experts. The relevance of these shifts in the information landscape will also become apparent in our particular case of 'realization'.

4   Methodology: Enacting Basic Income realization

In our empirical analysis we will describe BI advocacy in terms of diverse and competing claims to expertise, identifying how recently a fourth wave of approaches to 'realization' is emerging. This is of course not an innocent representation. As any scientific account on the topic, our analysis is part of this emerging innovation reality, unavoidably highlights some aspects whilst downplaying others (AUTHOR 2015b). The following points clarify how we have 'cased' (Ragin & Becker 1992) and 'enacted' (Michael 2016) BI advocacy:

Our account draws on a study that formed part of a set of 20 case studies, conducted within the framework of a project on Transformative Social Innovation (TSI). We thus approached the BI as a transformation of social relations, and BIEN as a transnational network promoting such TSI – on a par with collectives as diverse as Timebanks, Slow Food, Ecovillages and Co-housing. Compared with other cases in our sample, the BIEN/Basic Income case struck us as an outlier. Other than the typical experimenting with and showcasing of new ways of doing and organizing, this initiative stood out for its apparent focus on spreading new framings and knowings. Instead of starting from concrete small-scale 'working utopias' (Cf. section 5), BIEN aimed for universal roll-

out – requiring claims to expertise to persuade governments into making the envisioned new social relations real.

We have studied BIEN and BI advocacy along the generic methodological guidelines developed for case studies (AUTHOR 2016d) and for subsequent study of 'critical turning points' in the history of TSI initiatives (AUTHOR 2015c). Following a process approach (Pettigrew 1997), we have reconstructed how the BI concept and its advocacy have evolved over time. More specifically, we have considered how new ways of doing, organizing, framing and knowing were propagated, which is partly a matter of discourse analysis and partly an application of actor-network theory modes of inquiry that follow the shaping of socio-material networks (Latour 2005). The case study relies on 31 semi-structured interviews with key actors, a modest amount of observation of meetings, and selective review of the substantial BI literature. For the reconstruction of recent developments, we have relied considerably on BI-related websites (AUTHOR forthcoming 2017c). Next to investigating BIEN as a transnational network, we have studied 'local initiatives' in Germany, the Netherlands, Switzerland and Canada. Our analysis has thus been shaped by particularly prominent 'fourth wave' activities in these countries. As part of our approach of working with embedded units of analysis (Yin 2003) and networked innovation, we have investigated not only national BIEN affiliates but also other initiatives, actors and institutions as co-producing agents in the spread and translation of BI. This has crucially brought to light how the BI is 'realized' through diverse and sometimes competing claims to expertise.

As mentioned earlier, our investigative focus on the social-relational dimension of BI expertise somewhat neglects the substantive dimension that is so important to BIEN members. Our interpretation of BI promotion in terms of 'realization' also implies idiosyncrasies towards knowledge co-production and real-world experiments that are somewhat alien to the 'real utopianism' subscribed to many of our interviewees.

The crucial element of our enactment of BI advocacy is the distinction of the four 'realization' waves, however. Remembering Jasanoff (2003), this highly stylized scheme merits critical interrogation as such, especially as the former three waves clearly serve to set the stage for the suggested fourth one. In our analysis we will therefore try to avoid considering the 'fourth wave' phenomena in terms of taxonomies or stage models. Instead, we will explore whether and in which respects the newly emerging activities to propagate BI are indeed – as several protagonists have indicated – markedly different 'realization' strategies. Moreover, apart from their continuities and divergences, we will consider how the four waves are co-producing BI realization.

5 The BIEN network: three waves of approaches to BI realization

As sketched in section 2, the realization process of the BI concept started about five centuries ago. Ever since Thomas More, substantial efforts have been devoted to elaborating it into a compelling model for social security that politicians should consider. A key moment in this endeavor was the establishment of the Basic Income European Network (BIEN) in 1986. After several experiments in Northern America, political interest on that side of the Atlantic dwindled – only to re-kindle in Europe less than a decade later. At the first international congress on the topic, various researchers and activists decided to consolidate and continue their networking through BIEN, featuring a regular newsletter and biennial congresses. In 2004, acknowledging the growing group of supporters in non-European countries, BIEN became the Basic Income Earth Network. Currently this network of networks comprises national BI associations in 23 countries, and has just decided to have yearly rather than biennial conferences. Since 2006, the academic, peer-reviewed journal Basic Income Studies publishes two issues per year. Furthermore, an elaborate website is supporting BIEN in its operations as an international discussion platform, advocacy network and archive of BI insights. The rapid dissemination of actual developments and communication possibilities mark the different socio-material conditions for BI advocacy, which used to be highly dispersed and less visible.

BIEN was established to foster informed debate on the BI, initially in the form of social critiques, ethical argumentations, social-economic assessments of BI scenarios and later broadening towards experimentation methodologies, policy analyses and implementation issues. The 2002 Congress in Geneva, hosted by the ILO, was a turning point towards the latter: *"...what started in 2000, BIEN starting to become much more policy oriented. It became less of an academic network and more of an activist network. That was probably because the Geneva congress was organised by Guy Standing, who is an academic but much more interested in pushing the policy and in being actively involved in politics."* (YV, 2). This broadening of scope resonates with the description of BI as a 'real utopia' project: *"The idea of real utopias embraces this tension between dreams and practice: 'utopia' implies developing visions of alternatives to dominant institutions that embody our deepest aspirations for a world in which all people have access to the conditions to live flourishing lives; 'real' means proposing alternatives attentive to problems of unintended consequences, self-destructive dynamics, and difficult dilemmas of normative trade-offs"* (Olin Wright, 2013:3).

The above shifts reveal how BIEN's 'real utopia' project has yielded a diverse repertoire of action. BIEN members have shaped their transformative ambitions in three approaches to realization, each led by particular theories of change, governmentalities, and quests for scientific and political authority. The three waves we distinguish are in line with the 'journey' that Olin Wright (2013) sketched between imagination and concretization, but are in particular inspired by Groot & van der Veen (2001). In their analysis of the Dutch BI discussion between 1975 and 2001, they identified three largely consecutive stages in the discussion that – in adapted form – can also be used to

untangle the different 'realization' approaches that exist within the BIEN network more broadly.

Social critiques. The seminal 'Utopia' by Thomas More started a first wave of claims to expertise in the form of social critique. These claims typically address society at large, challenging and debunking (Latour 2004) existing expertise and the associated governmentalities of 'earned income'. An important element in the critical-utopian forms of expertise construction is counterfactual reasoning: The society in which income security has been realized for all individuals is held up against societal structures in which social exclusion, inequality, alienation, and lack of freedom are the heavy prices to pay for the insistence on 'income through work'. The counter-intuitive concept of an unconditional income entitlement unsettles control-oriented modes of governance, the underlying knowings of human nature, and moral convictions that one should earn one's income. In the context of 20th century Welfare states, the BI critiques typically challenged the broad political consensus on the 'right to work' and associated workfare policies, arguing that it was actually the insistence on full employment – not the BI - that was increasingly unrealistic. In the later 1970s and the 1980s, the BI was firmly embedded in radical Left discourses. As a longstanding BIEN member and MP for the Dutch radical Left recalls, the BI was a very principled matter: *"The unemployment was that high and so without prospects in the early eighties, that people were saying, 'I simply consider my unemployment allowance as a basic income – and I will do with it as I please'"* (AdR, 3). Currently, he considers that this critical-principled approach has made way for a much more pragmatic attitude to BI activism.

This rootedness in radical political activism should not obscure, however, how the first wave of BI realization was about construction of expertise. BIEN started out as a network of academic philosophers, sociologists and economists that collectively developed authoritative expertise on BI: specifying moral principles and evaluation criteria for arrangements of social security, they strengthened the case for the BI as an alternative that could stand the test better than well-established but sub-optimal policies. Van Parijs (1997) for example made the BI utopia look realistic by demonstrating meticulously how it served above all self-determination, thereby laying the basis for the compelling activist slogan that 'the BI is neither Left nor Right but rather Forward'.

Scientific underpinning. BIEN has developed activities similar to 'evidence-based activism'. In the second wave in BI 'realization' they move from critical outsiders to experts that act 'from within', which several BI protagonists describe tellingly in terms of maturation (e.g. Groot & van der Veen (2001)). A strong conviction within BIEN has always been that the critique should be accompanied by the formulation of realistic, scientifically well underpinned alternatives. Van Parijs (2013: 173) is particularly outspoken on the need for scientific ammunition, as it distinguishes their 'real utopia' from wishful thinking and moral appeals: *"Utopian thinking requires answers to many factual questions about likely effects, about compatibility, about sustainability. It is perfectly legitimate for the choice of these factual questions to be guided by value judgments, but it is essential that the answers to these questions be shielded from the*

inference of both our interests and our values." This commitment to scientific underpinning and expertise has materialized in an academic BI journal, and in various efforts to provide calculations, economic modelling and empirical data to substantiate BI performance on key welfare indicators. Key consideration in this 'realization' approach is that full-fledged implementation of the universal entitlement requires large-scale support across the governmental apparatus, and that scientific underpinning needs to be mobilized to persuade not only voters but also politicians and the various practices of budgeting, macro-economic forecasting and accounting that co-perform (Callon 1997) the social security system. Governmental planning bureaus and advisory councils have therefore been key addressees of BIEN's claims to expertise, as crucial gatekeepers in evidence-based policymaking. The second wave acknowledged that what is countable counts (Nowotny 2007), and aspired to fit in with ideals of rational decision-making and efficient management (Marston & Watts 2003).

The aforementioned gatekeepers of evidence-based policymaking seem to have been identified well – whilst also proving to be insurmountable passage points. The prevailing macro-economic models typically do not articulate the long-term system feedbacks that BIEN experts hold in favour of their alternative. As a by-route, some BIEN members explore the prospects of experimentation, developing methodologies but also undertaking them in various countries (Forget, 2008; Terwitte 2009; Standing 2012; 2013). As argued by Groot (2006:2), such BI experiments not only provide an empirical baseline against which to evaluate currently prevailing arrangements, but would also be crucial as demonstration: *"I think a radical idea such as a BI needs to be shown to work, in order to get it on the political agenda"*. Nevertheless, Groot also indicates why experiments tend to be mistrusted amongst BI advocates. Even if they could complement the notoriously incomplete and uncertain outputs of economic model calculations, they are inherently too bounded, non-representative, and short-lived to testify to the soundness of BI as a policy option (Groot 2006: 3-4).

Policy entrepreneurship. This third wave can be considered an attempt to correct for the strong emphasis on scientific authority. Partly as a reflection on the political shipwrecks that some well-formulated pieces of BI expertise had become (Groot & van der Veen 2001), critical arguments were raised against the idealized view of politics in BIEN circles, mistaking it for a forum of ideas rather than a game of interests. Elster (1986: 714) reproached BI proponents for neglecting that their envisioned social reform is not only morally counter-intuitive, but also 'clouded in uncertainty', fraught with disruptions along the transitional process, and therefore undeserving of societal acceptance. Others asserted similarly that the 'real utopia' project requires a theory of transformation (Olin Wright 2013: 3), attending more to the fragility of societal acceptance, the intricacies of implementation processes and the erratic dynamics of political decision making. Arguing for a 'mature' and less principled BI debate, De Wispelaere & Stirton (2004: 272) thus sought to attune BI expertise to practices of 'fuzzy' policy design. Groot & van der Veen (2001) likewise explored scenarios of implementation 'by stealth' or 'through the back door', taking the BI achievements of recent taxation reforms as an example.

The third wave indicates the gained strategic understanding that the force of moral appeal, rational argument and evidence should crucially be supported by clever policy entrepreneurship. In line with the largely academic constitution of BIEN, this policy entrepreneurship has been taken up to a modest degree. Academics have focused on the aforementioned channels of evidence-based policymaking, whilst the politicians in BIEN circles were quite aware of the political taboos surrounding the BI. A notable policy entrepreneur has been Brazilian Senator Eduardo Suplicy, who crucially helped to introduce the 'Bolsa Familia' program for poor families with school-aged children, as part of a series of BI-inspired policies. Other examples are Guy Standing's work while heading the ILO's socio-economic security program and his consecutive engagement in Indian BI experiments, and more recently, the effective political lobbying and campaigning of BIEN affiliates in Switzerland, Finland, Canada, the Netherlands and Germany (Cf. section 6).

Notwithstanding these achievements in policy entrepreneurship, the transformative impacts have remained modest. Longstanding BI advocates have described the existence of BI tellingly as a peat fire – largely remaining below the surface and apparently extinct in certain political episodes, yet never dying out and regularly flaring up again in political life. Through the 'realization' concept we have unpacked this 'peat fire' of BI advocacy into diverse and competing efforts at gaining epistemic and political authority. These could mutually reinforce into a blaze, but so far the quite continuously burning torch of scientific authority seems to have lacked effective policy entrepreneurship to ignite political authority. As indicated by De Wispelaere & Stirton (2016), such pragmatic approach to BI realization has recently become only more important, as the BI is gaining political authority.

6.0   Competing claims to expertise: A fourth wave in BI realization?

After the 'social critique', 'scientific underpinning' and 'policy entrepreneurship' waves, it seems that a fourth wave in BI realization is emerging – as various BI protagonists have indicated. In the following we highlight their breaks with earlier approaches but also accounting for continuity. We describe subsequently the crowd-funding initiatives and their attempts to create experiential knowledge on BI (**6.1**), the internet activism that makes the BI ubiquitous and therefore more real (**6.2**), the petitions and referenda that democratize the BI debate and work on political authority (**6.3**), and finally the experimentation initiatives that reflect innovation in governance but also commitments to evidence-based policy (**6.4**).

6.1   crowd-funding: experiencing the BI

At a distance from the BIEN network, some individuals and collectives, for example in Germany, the Netherlands and the US, take a radically different realization strategy than persuasive critique, authoritative evidence or political lobbying. Very similar to the 'working utopias' described by Crossley (1999), their crowd-funding initiatives aim to develop experiential expertise on the utopian concept.

The small Dutch collective MIES ('Enterprise for Innovation in Economy & Society', MIES 2016) exemplifies this quest for experiential expertise. As curious individuals from various entrepreneurial, activist and academic backgrounds they shared a certain enthusiasm about the BI, but also agreed that the societal debate on it had become hopelessly stuck in adversarial, repetitive, and especially entrenched exchanges of arguments. 'Let's just stop talking about that BI', one of them had blogged provocatively. As he explains: *"That BI, it is typically something with which you get stuck on the divergent views that people have on human behavior, and on society. It is no longer about arguments, but really a matter of beliefs. Like, 'I don't think that that will work out, that BI, I believe that it will make people lazy'. Like that, you don't get any further. People who do not believe in something, you can't convince them. You can only show it, like, 'that's what we did, then and there. This is what we saw – now is this still what you believe?'"* (RM, 3-4). In the light of these ideologically colored conjectures about behavioral and societal effects, MIES seeks to move beyond traditional BI advocacy. However eloquently formulated, none of the moral arguments and scientific reasoning had allowed the public to see, feel, and experience how a BI would change life and society.

'Let's just do it', MIES therefore decided in 2014. Inspired by a German pioneer whom they found through the internet, they started a crowd-funding initiative that would finance one individuals' BI of 1000 EUR/month for one year. The first selected recipient was a local activist. His urban horticulture, meeting place and social inclusion center exemplified the multiple societal benefits that could be created if individuals were released from income-earning pressures. As a singular BI provided for only one year, this was remote from meeting any criteria of solid scientific evidence. The MIES chairman had no difficulties admitting that it was a 'marketing strategy' however, wholeheartedly taking up the policy entrepreneurship that BI advocacy had been lacking. MIES' key strategy to play into realization feedbacks were the self-recorded video blogs of the BI-receiving individual on the 'Our Basic Income' website[2], sharing from the kitchen table *"what he did with the money, and what the money did with him"*. The immediacy created through this reveal MIES' powerful 'out-formation' strategy (Ezrahi 2004), making full use of the changing communication infrastructures for political life. This element in the realization strategy was reinforced through the website, confronting visitors with the question often heard in fourth wave activism: 'what would you do with a basic income?'. In turn, MIES' pleas for broader BI experimentation received substantial media attention, with three nationally broadcasted

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[2] https://onsbasisinkomen.nl/

documentaries (Tegenlicht 2015) as important reinforcements of the carefully fabricated 'hype' (Cf. section 6.4).

The crowd-funding initiatives are clear examples of the newly emerging 'realization' repertoire through their 'out-formation' strategies, and their way of including the public in the BI discussion: citizens 'vote' directly without any bureaucratic intervention through small financial contributions. A further important element in these expertise constructions is the attitude of pragmatic inquiry and political independence. The German crowd-funding pioneers, who helped realizing 77 BIs to date, are particularly keen on the latter – with an eye on eventual large-scale realization: *"We consciously decided to not appear political with 'My Basic Income' and avoid being put into the 'left corner' because we would not reach many people that we need to reach if a basic income is ever to be implemented on national level."* (JA, 5). Finally, the recent engagement of Silicon Valley CEOs in crowd-funded BI initiatives suggests that broader 'out-formation' campaigns are emerging.

6.2 internet activism: making BI ubiquitous.

Similar to the crowd-funding initiatives considered above, modern ICT also features at the heart of this cluster of realization activities. BIEN, as a network of networks, is crucially supporting itself through a dedicated BI website that functions as a resource and information hub for members and anyone else interested in the topic. In addition to 'just-the-facts' news on BI-related developments across the globe, the website features opinion pieces, reviews or analyses. Anyone can submit a lead on a news item or pitch a feature suggestion. Six editors are issuing what have become monthly newsletters, as well as *"an average of two or three news stories every day, most of them original"* (Widerquist & Haagh 2016). Importantly, this communication network is expanded significantly through the websites of more than 20 national BIEN affiliates and the multitude of other more loosely connected initiatives (such as MIES), together creating an ecology of BI advocacy through the concept becomes increasingly ubiquitous.

The BI Canada Network conducted a major overhaul of its online appearance in 2014, including a dedicated fundraising effort. At that time, a rather basic website existed next to two other websites created for the 2012 North American BI Congress in Toronto and the 2014 BIEN Congress in Montreal. The secretary of the BICN Board recalls that *"Around the BIEN congress in 2014 in Montreal, we did a lot of press releases and we did a lot of media appearances. And we had a media and stakeholder guide […] and it was, you know, our document that said anytime you talk to the media, these are the key messages that you should hit up, and this is strategically how you should talk about basic income. And in that document we intentionally discussed basic income as something that we already have in part. ...Because we already have a version of it for seniors and for kids. In Canada."* (JvD:6). Noticing the great media resonance of this

framing, they took their policy entrepreneurship further to finally create the long-desired more informative, interactive and user-friendly website.

Next to conventional websites allowing (at most) responses to articles, most groups, including BIEN, are also active on Facebook or Twitter - posting, tagging, liking, commenting and sharing; tweeting and retweeting. As the creation of communication platforms has become increasingly effortless, communication activities are developing in parallel to the activities of BIEN members. This further adds to the virtual buzz around the BI, and empowers individual BI advocates. Compared to earlier days of isolated and unacknowledged agency, the BI communications network provides them with social acknowledgement, with confirmation of their insights, and with the awareness of being part of a large and continuously growing movement: *"Thanks mostly to Basic Income News, BIEN's website has grown from 60 unique visits per day in June of 2013 to 1,365 unique visits per day in May of 2016. Some articles have reached more than 45,000 people. NewsFlash subscriptions have more than doubled in the last ten months, from 2,100 subscribers in August 2015 to 4,300 subscribers by June 2015."* (Widerquist & Haagh 2016).

The increasing communications on BI-related developments co-produce a partly self-fulfilling suggestion of BI realization. As the plethora of online pages seems to steadily broaden the public political forum, BIEN can be seen to reassert its particular scientific expertise amidst the 'rapid and disorganised flows of communication and understanding' (Bertilsson 2002:3) of the information highway. Clear indications of this are the short biographies of online editorial staff, which contrast somewhat with the other internet activists who rather construct credibility through their personal 'road to conviction'. This reflects how the expanding BI communication sphere caters to a diversifying spectrum of audiences and experts, 'realizing' it at least as far the concept is becoming ubiquitous..

6.3 petitions & referenda: democratizing the BI debate.

This cluster of realization approaches signifies a break away from the policy entrepreneurship undertaken by politicians (Cf. section 2). In recent times, there are increasingly vehement civic attempts to insert the topic on the political agenda more vehemently, be it through the direct-democratic arrangements as they exist in Switzerland, or through petitions.

In Germany, the first online petition for a BI was triggered by an individual without connections to existing BI networks. In 2008, Susanne Wiest started two petitions: one for a change in taxation law for day care providers, and one for a BI, an idea that had fascinated her for the past two years. Only the latter petitions passed the rather opaque barrier of initial selection, only after which she learnt about the requisite co-signature of

at least 50,000 German citizens. Many long-term BI supporters started rallying for the petition immediately, but the German BIEN affiliate network joined in comparatively late: the petition featured a financing model for the BI that they are not in favour of. Wiest remembers: *"And then I said: well, can't we link arms as long as we are all still standing under the same label "We want the BI", because the discussion is not further yet, right? So, let's link arms and march in the same direction! And later, closer to implementation, we can have these [model] discussions, ... that's when they are appropriate."* Reckoning that the specific economic-financial expertise would only become relevant later on in BI realization, her expertise started from common sense. Proposing a simpler consumption-based taxation model, she argued: *"work will no longer be taxed - it is not logical to do so if it supposedly becomes ever more scarce".* The expertise she crucially needed to support her initiative was rather of an organizational nature: tech-savvy individuals had to monitor the petition's progress, and flag apparent bottlenecks long before the storm of signatories brought the Parliamentarian server to collapse. The petition process eventually culminated in a public hearing at the Parliamentarian Petition Committee in 2010.

This tool in BI realization has subsequently been copied by others. In 2013, a European Citizens' Initiative for an BI was started but failed to reach the 1 million signatures quorum within 12 months. In 2016 a Dutch citizens' initiative achieved the required 40,000 signatures, yet the responsible parliamentary committee decided against a parliamentary debate as the BI had already been discussed addressed a few months earlier following the appeal of an individual MP. Although all instances of petitions failed to trigger parliamentary debates, they nevertheless sparked public interest in the topic and brought to life numerous action groups.

Switzerland, taking pride in a 120-years' history of direct democracy, presents its citizens with a rather unique tool to work on BI realization. After four years of preparations, a citizens' initiative for a popular vote on a BI was officially launched in 2012. For 18 months, existing and newly formed BI initiatives worked successfully to gain civic support for their request towards a popular vote: more than the required 100,000 valid signatures were handed in at the Federal Chancellery in Bern. On 5 June 2016, 77% of the electorate rejected, and 23% supported, the proposal for a constitutional amendment that would introduce a BI in Switzerland. The world society, and not only BI supporters, paid attention as Switzerland voted on a BI (Van Parijs 2016a). Importantly, the entire process was interspersed with remarkable public performances that generated global media attention for this BI realization: media events were created around a truck unloading 8 million *Fünferlis* (Swiss coins), dancing robots were demonstrating for a BI at the World Economic Forum in Davos, notes of 10 Swiss Francs were handed out as material underlining, and a Guinness world record was set for a giant-sized poster in golden letters: *"What would you do if your income was taken care of?".* Within the previously more academically-oriented BIEN-Switzerland these developments triggered a presidential change from academic to activist – even if the network remains dedicated to construing the issue in depth. Especially amongst the

initiators of the popular vote, the realization process is cast as a decidedly ethical discussion however, echo-ing the social critiques in which appeals to self-realization, and solidarity were keys to expertise construction.

6.4 experiments: between citizen labs and evidence-based policy.

The crowd-funding initiatives achieve considerable exposure and political authority through their constructions of experiential expertise (Cf. section 5.1). Moreover, the pragmatically-inquiring attitude of MIES forms part of a much broader movement towards BI experimentation that is gaining political support in various countries. Especially the governmental commitments for BI experiments in Canada, the Netherlands and in Finland count as promising breakthroughs in the key element of BIEN's 'real utopianism', the development of scientific underpinning and evidence basis. As discussed in section 5, experiments evokes mixed feelings within BIEN, for their inherently limited capacity to simulate a real BI – running over a life course, rolled-out over whole countries, and applying to rich and poor alike. Somewhat dismissively, BIEN standard bearer van Parijs therefore underlined the 'propaganda-effect' of the Dutch experiments (Van Parijs 2016b).

The term 'propaganda-effect' is apt to describe the Dutch experimentation, as far as it appreciates the broader the 'realization' process it forms part of. More than the Finnish and the Canadian experimentation trajectories, which appear to be rooted more firmly in commitments to evidence-policy, the Dutch trajectory displays a complex mixture of motives and claims to expertise. In line with Voß (2014) who considers real-world experiments as the typical culmination points of realization processes, the process towards the experiments displays a stepwise build-up towards political and scientific realization. They emerge at the intersection of ambitions towards 'citizen labs' and governance innovation on the one hand, and commitments to evidence-based policymaking on the other hand.

The aforementioned MIES collective demonstrate elaborate policy entrepreneurship as they have used their crowd-funding initiative as a springboard for broader programs of real-world experiments. As MIES' chairman underlined, their approach decidedly moved away from BIEN members' traditional focus on national government. However important for institutional changes such as the BI, he considered it the wrong entrance for what should start from small-scale, community-based and locally rooted experimentations. *"On the local level, one is of course confronted with the fact that there is increasing numbers of people on the dole and in other welfare schemes as well. Here in Groningen, [...] the local administrators are surely aware that in this particular regional context, whatever one does, this number of people won't be helped into employment. [...] Any action will have to start at the local level. That is what's happening now, which is hugely different from what happened in the 1980s. Back then,*

the BI was actually an idea that was still largely confined in the heads of researchers [and some others, dispersed over various public sector organizations]. In any case, it wasn't anchored in politics, and surely not in local politics, and that is the great difference." (JR, 7). On their website, MIES therefore published a framework for local-level BI experiments. Together with similarly experimentation-minded individuals they welded a broad network of civic initiatives, local-level politicians and administrators to support their political calls for citizen labs, participatory governance and experimentation.

The experiments, scheduled to take place from the beginning of 2017 onwards, are in many ways the result of political authority gained for ideas that had already acquired a degree of scientific authority. Crucially, the experiments reflect the tensions between municipal governments and national-level government over a recent devolution operation. The BI-inspired experiments with more lenient and less conditional welfare entitlements went directly against the national-level policy doctrines of workfare and toughness on the unemployed. It is significant that the experiments have eventually been granted by the responsible Secretary of State in the form of exception clauses to otherwise firm policies of conditional income – giving in to the considerable media exposure, broadly supported parliamentary motions and well-organized political entrepreneurship of social innovation initiatives and aldermen of middle-sized cities.

During the realization process towards the real-world experiments, the framing has gradually been attenuated towards BI-*inspired* experiments. According to the self-appointed and crowd-funded 'experimentation broker' who has led the political lobbying towards the experimentations, the BI label was initially an asset. *"It is just entering people's minds directly. I think it was just often discussed at the kitchen table, or in the train, or wherever people meet. Anybody can relate to this, and form an opinion about it. So, it is really a topic that could 'go viral' in society, and it did".* (SH, 14) On the other hand, he also found that the shock value of the associated 'Money for Free' slogan made the BI label into a burden in the political lobbying. Having become known as a hobby-horse of the political left-wing, the BI required a much less ideological approach. Instead, he favoured an experimenting attitude, so as to gain a degree of scientific authority, beyond and next to the rather principled activism the Dutch Basic Income association. *"...the constituency of the association is generally activist in mindset: 'we want a basic income because it is a human right', or 'because that is how things should be' – but currently, that represents only a very small minority of society, of course. So, then you're having rather a political movement, whereas the characteristic feature of these experiments is often to be pragmatic, to just see whether it works and not to assume from the beginning [what outcomes should be]. And that is the role I have tried to fulfill, to move the debate out of the hypothetical sphere and the pro and contra positions, and instead explore 'what can we do with this' – with all political parties together, that is."* (SH, 16)

7.0   Competing claims to expertise; a fourth wave in BI realization

BIEN members have tellingly characterized the BI as a peat fire. Our analysis in terms of 'realization' showed how it is fueled with different claims to expertise and incited by changing political winds. In the following we answer our research questions through synthesis observations on the divergences and continuities between the waves of expertise constructions, as well as the co-produced realization of the BI **(7.1)**. Finally, we consider some of the paradoxes of BI advocacy to draw broader implications for initiatives towards transformative social innovation **(7.2)**.

7.1   A fourth wave in BI realization

The 'realization' framework shifts attention from substantive expertise about the BI and its transformative potentials towards relational expertise, as constructed through BIEN and other BI advocates. As such it helps articulating various developments in contemporary BI advocacy in terms of a fourth wave. Even if the crowd-funding, internet activism, civic petitions and experiments are difficult to capture under a general header, they do – as a group of activities – display conspicuous moves away from previous phases of real utopianism.

One distinct trait of the more recent, rather pragmatic approaches is that the first wave of expertise claims through social critique features far less prominently – at least as far as it takes the form of principled contestations of hegemonic belief systems and norms. Contemporary BI activism seems to start from the basic understanding that it is a counter-intuitive and transformative knowing that as such is unlikely to be widely shared. Fourth wave approaches appear to diverge even further from the second wave of scientific underpinning, however. Especially the crowd-funding initiatives challenge the evidence-based activism of BIEN. However sound the reasoning, however elaborate the models, and however extensive the evidence basis, all of it is considered insufficiently decisive in the face of deeply held convictions and entrenched political positions in an altogether abstract debate. The careful development of 'out-formation' strategies, and the drafting of the public through a certain immediate contact with the BI seems to be a key marker for the fourth wave. A related distinct trait is that expertise is constructed in relation to the broader public, rather than towards political decision-makers and the experts. Similar aims for inclusiveness and bypassing of expertocracy can be seen in the internet activism and civic petition activities. Contemporary realization strategies are clearly exploring alternative ways to enter parliamentary politics: the third wave of policy entrepreneurship is revitalized. Petitions, creations of hype and especially connections with local-level societal challenges and shifts in governance can be

appreciated as variations on the earlier 'implementation through the back door' scenarios as contemplated by BI scholars.

The fourth wave activists' deliberate ruptures with traditional claims to expertise are confirmed by the accounts of longstanding BI advocates. 'Traditional' BI advocates often voice admiration for the contemporary pragmatism, political entrepreneurship and creation of involvement, but also worry that the radical Welfare system reforms are lost from sight. The crowd-funding initiatives may breathe life into the abstract BI concept, but its particularistic approach also transforms a universal right into a lottery. Likewise, online activism, petitions and initiatives towards referenda may bring political agenda-setting and decision-making more firmly into the people's hands, yet it seems to underestimate the persistent governmentalities that keep shaping social security and socio-economic policy. The experiments are the condensation points of the conflicting expertise constructions that pervade BI advocacy and even divide individual BI advocates: they are acknowledged as crucial steps towards an open and evidence-based societal debate, but they are also mistrusted as they channel the transformative concept into a neutralised, compartmentalised and projectified form. Principled BI supporters' claims about experiments' 'propaganda effects' reveal these clashing expertise constructions: the experiments are useful, but not the real thing.

As a co-productionist framework, the 'realization' perspective also helps to remember that these ruptures in expertise construction are easily exaggerated. The new wave of BI realization is in many ways continuing the real-utopian project. The pragmatic crowd-funding and experimenting initiatives may appear to have given in to post-political ideology, but this is also a matter of strategic political awareness and policy entrepreneurship. Crucially, the new approaches can be seen to rely heavily on the discursive archive and the evidence basis created by decades or even centuries of social critique, scientific underpinning and policy analysis insights. This continuity and reliance on earlier gained political and scientific authority is particularly evident in the internet activism and civic petitions, which are clearly empowered by the awareness of standing on the shoulders of giants. The combination of breaks and continuity with earlier waves of expertise construction manifests in various ways of re-inventing and especially re-packaging the BI. The set of ideas itself is not adapted that much, actually. In line with Ezrahi (2004) it is rather that the recent wave of BI advocacy is strongly adapting to the changing social-material and communicative conditions shaping political life, and using them to accelerate and amplify the feedbacks between political and scientific authority as sketched in Voß (2014).

Finally, apart from the significant continuity between the otherwise different waves, the 'realization' framework crucially helps to articulate the co-production between different expertise constructions. Competing claims do give rise to significant controversy – not only with the established expertise and convictions, but also within the camp of BI advocates. The realization framework clarifies in this regard how the expertise constructions are not orthogonally cancelling out each other. Instead, it articulates what is also implicit in the 'peat fire' metaphor developed by BI advocates themselves,

namely that they are different fuels that together are feeding a fire. There is an unmistakable intertwinement and exchange between the BIEN network and the various 'fourth wave' initiatives, to begin with. Moreover, their expertise constructions display reinforcing feedbacks, in some contexts indeed showing scientific and political agendas converging into real-world experiments. The crowd-funding, internet activism and civic petitions can be seen to co-produce 'buzz' and 'hype', to which pragmatic experimenters and BIEN activists add scientific authority.

7.2 Transformative social innovation and paradoxes of expertise

The 'peat fire' of BI realization holds various lessons for initiatives towards transformative social innovation (TSI) more generally. To compensate for our focus on relational than substantive expertise (Evans & Collins 2008), it merits consideration how the vast discursive archive on the BI has kept a fire burning ever since Thomas More's 'Utopia'. The BIEN network has developed a form of 'evidence-based activism' (Epstein 1995; Rabeharisoa et al. 2014) to promote a counter-intuitive, morally contested, transformative knowing. For other TSI initiatives it is insightful how expertise is made into a key asset, which is systematically produced through the international BIEN network, a dedicated journal and international conferences. Importantly, this institutionalized knowledge production also includes various studies undertaken or commissioned by governmental organizations: the BI has become a common reference in political life.

In line with the relational approach to expertise implied with the 'realization' framework, however, the broader implications of our study concern the complexities of mobilizing expertise, and of having it acknowledged. In this regard we distill three paradoxes from our case. The first of these pertains to the apparent need for flexible consistency. The case brings out how transformative knowings can be realized through various roles and expertise constructions, and how switching between the different waves in real utopianism effectively fuels the peat fire. On the other hand, the case also shows how the fire is kept burning through the consistent repetition of key discursive elements: the BI has become a common reference in political life, and activists can build on established expertise as they make their claims. A second paradox follows directly from the 'realization' framework. Voß (2014) indicates feedback loops between political and scientific authority that indeed seem to identify relevant communication devices and contestation sites on the road towards real-world experiments. However, the dual aim for political and scientific authority also creates risks of entrapment: how will the political and scientific claims to expertise of BI advocates stand during and in the wake of the hard-won Dutch experiments?

Finally, there is a third paradox that the BI case conveys particularly strongly. Studies on TSI have often documented how such initiatives tend to resist dominant knowings,

and undertake activities through alternative governmentalities and ways of knowing (e.g. Scott-Cato & Hillier 2010). As indicated by Prince (2010) however, experts and expertise should not be naively equaled to incumbent actors and hegemonic knowings. BIEN is a case in point, seeking to realize a decidedly subaltern way of knowing by playing the game of expertocracy. Stirling (2016: 265-266) has pointed out in this regard that BIEN would certainly not be the first of transformative movements to fall victim to the temptations of control-oriented, evidence-based and technically managed societal transformation. This elicits a paradox pervading BI realization. The BI radically steers clear from control-oriented modes of governance through its trust in unconditional income entitlements and self-organizing individuals – on the other hand, the moral commitment to a universal BI naturally leads to theories of change premised on structural state reforms. The paradox in more general terms is then that initiatives towards transformative social innovation need to construct expertise such that it reflects both suspicions about, as well as reasons for, 'seeing like a state' (Scott 1998).

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