

From Utopia to Implementation

Findings from an exploratory study

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Introduction

- Research outline
- Key themes – by location
- Key themes – cross-cutting
- Conclusion
- Footnote

Research Focus

- How and why has basic income moved from the margins to the mainstream
- Contexts, circumstances, policy problems, key actors
- What happens to the idea when it encounters reality?

Research Design

- 4 case studies – Finland, Ontario, Netherlands, Scotland
- Interviews with experts, advocates, civil servants, politicians
- Key themes within and across cases

Findings

Finland: Pragmatism and Experimentation

- Evidence-based policy
- Pragmatic rather than ideological
- Self-contained rather than wider signifier

Ontario: Poverty and Holism

- Focus on poverty
- Public and political discomfort with effects of poverty
- Widespread and diverse advocacy

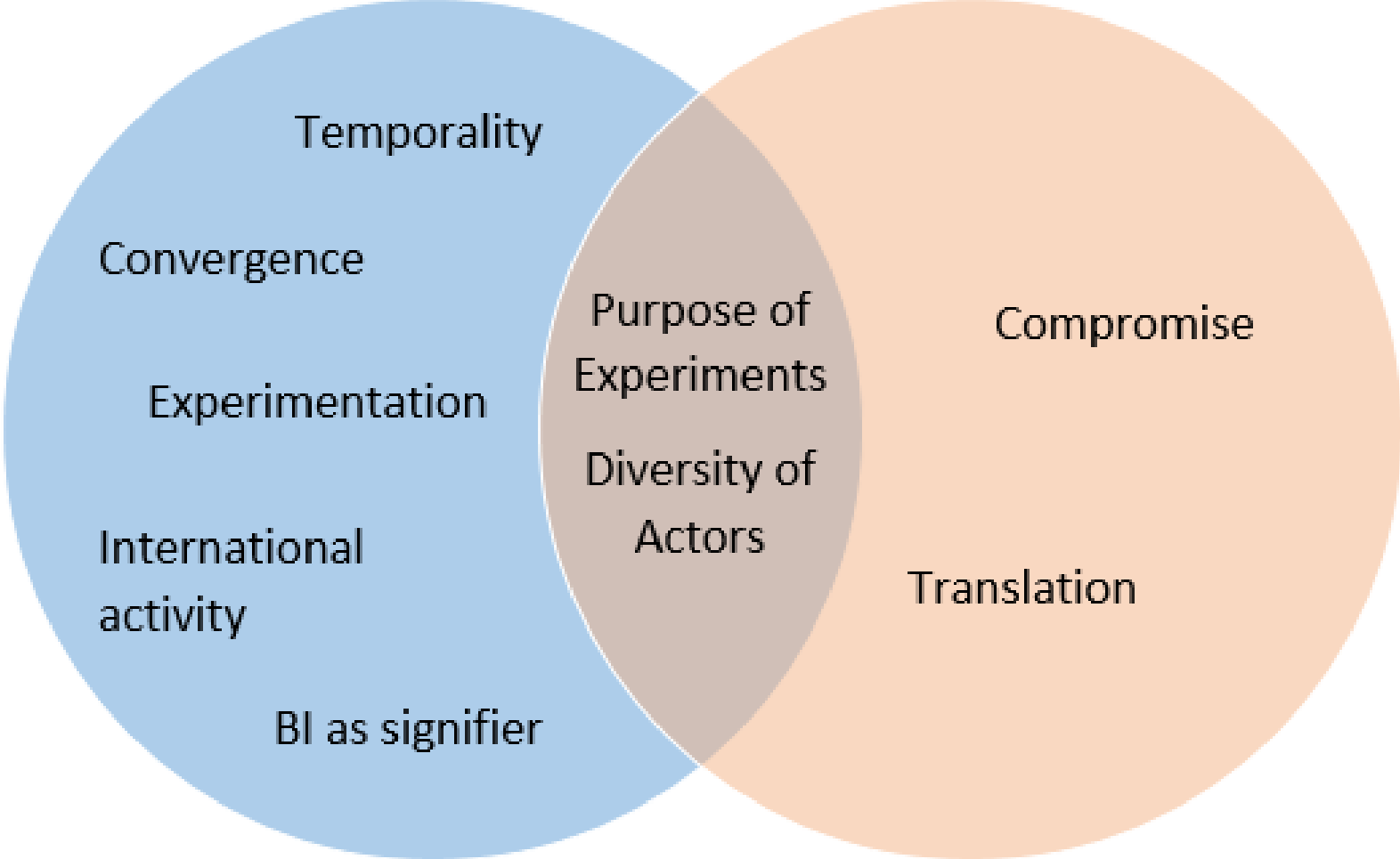
Netherlands: Conflict and Compromise

- Political tension and divergence between local and national
- Compromise, compromise, compromise
- Importance of local coalitions

Scotland: Collaboration and Resonance

- Advocacy, collaboration, public engagement
- Entrenched social problems
- Signifier of potential for broad and deep social change

Cross-cutting themes



Enablers ↔ Mediators ↔ Modifiers

Cross cutting themes: enablers

- Temporality
- Convergence
- Experimentation
- International activity
- BI as signifier

Temporality

“I call it the old idea that’s become new again”

Ontario

“... at another point it could perhaps have slipped into just being a policy debate”

Scotland

Convergence

“... there was enough convergence of external interest and internal interest and support being expressed”

Ontario

“... a book called Free Money for Everyone heated up the discussion... about the same time that the new law had been introduced, and suddenly there was room for experiments”

Netherlands

Experimentation

“... evidence-based policy and experimenting in general are getting more popular”

Netherlands

“... this is just an experiment with some aspects of basic income, this is not a model that could be implemented at all”

Finland

BI as signifier

“... it’s time to actually try something big and bold”

Ontario

“... there’s a symbolic component to it”

Netherlands

International Activity

“... we are hoping that our government would take this seriously because other countries are following what we are doing”

Finland

Cross cutting themes: mediators

- Purpose of Experiments
- Diversity of Actors

Purpose of Experiments

“... the current social security system is very inadequate and doesn't actually help people, it tends to hinder them”

Scotland

“... the laws and the way we work at the moment, they don't work and they are not future proof”

Netherlands

Diversity of Actors

“... a broad movement of organisations and initiatives has been involved, this has really led to broad support among the local population”

Netherlands

Cross cutting themes: modifiers

- Translation
- Compromise

Translation

“... these experiments all differ slightly because each experiment is influenced by the interests of local parties, what they think is the most interesting research question”

Netherlands

Compromise

“... the big changes have been due to political negotiations”

“It’s not as ambitious as we wanted”

Netherlands

“... we had to compromise all the time”

Finland

Conclusion

- Cluster of factors, occurring together, interacting, strengthening
- Convergence of problems, policy and politics (Kingdon)
 - *Long-term problems and failure of existing policy*
 - *Basic income gained in popularity*
 - *Political and expert actors looking for radical solutions*
- Reality forces the paradigmatic to change
- Not a blueprint for elsewhere – but provides useful pointers

Thanks

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