Basic Income Experiments
A Political Feasibility Analysis

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Basic Income Experiments

- Reasons and goals
- Opportunities and limitations

Focus: how experiments affect the chances of basic income becoming policy
Political Feasibility

- Theoretical framework by de Wispelaere and Noguera (2012)
- Political feasibility: whether a policy could be implemented in the political environment

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Main Question

Can basic income experiments contribute to political feasibility of basic income?
Institutional feasibility

• **Definition:** whether the institutional background of a country would make the implementation of a basic income possible
• test run in terms of institutional context
• practical insights
• **Finland:** focus on putting basic income within complex institutional context (incl. legislation), difficult process, limitations evident

➢ can inform introduction of basic income on a wider scale, but cannot show effects all on system
Behavioural feasibility

• **Definition**: robustness of the policy in the long-term in terms of the behaviour of individuals after implementation
• full behavioural effects cannot emerge
• Study design determines usefulness of results
• **Finland**: only unconditionality of unemployment benefits tested

➤ not all effects of wider basic income can emerge, but some questions about behaviour of individuals or communities can be answered
Strategic feasibility

- **Definition:** support from political actors and its influence on likelihood of basic income being implemented
- real support from powerful political agents needed
- experiments can cause divisions between supporters
- political motivation matters
- **Finland:** different interest groups, split support after detailed proposals, study design influenced by political pressures and resource restrictions

- can have positive or negative effect on strategic feasibility
Psychological feasibility

• **Definition:** legitimization of a policy proposal via public support
• experiments to overcome misconceptions, generate interest
• more support for experiments than for basic income itself
• **Finland:** experiment could show what effect unconditionality has, but not all
  behaviour captured

➢ biggest potential to contribute to political feasibility
Conclusion

• experiments can, but do not automatically, make basic income more politically feasible, and can also reduce political feasibility
• study design matters
• experiments are one part of the political discussion
• limited contribution to behavioural or institutional feasibility
• awareness of potential effect in terms of psychological and strategic feasibility
Reference