

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

	Prospective Constraints (achievability)	Retrospective Constraints (viability)
Discrete Agency (identifiable individuals)	Strategic feasibility	Institutional feasibility
Diffuse Agency (groups and collectives)	Psychological feasibility	Behavioural feasibility

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

- de Wispelaere, J. and Noguera, J. (2012) 'Chapter 2: On the Political Feasibility of Universal Basic Income: An Analytical Framework' in Caputo, R. (ed.) *Basic income guarantee and politics: International experiences and perspectives on the viability of income guarantee*, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke, pp. 17-38