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From Crackpot Idea to Mainstream Debate

The Public Debate and Popular Support for Universal Basic Income in the Netherlands

Proefschrift ter verkrijging van de graad van doctor aan Tilburg University op gezag van de rector magnificus, prof. dr. W.B.H.J. van de Donk, in het openbaar te verdedigen ten overstaan van een door het college voor promoties aangewezen commissie in de Aula van de Universiteit op woensdag 28 juni 2023 om 16.00 uur door

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Preface

The idea of writing a book was extremely scary to me. I cannot imagine having achieved this milestone without the help of my supervisors, prof. Peter Achterberg and dr. Femke Roosma. They were there to give substantive advice, but more importantly, they made big things small, encouraged me to follow my ideas, and got me back on my feet when I got lost. I know I still owe you a few gin-tonics. Special thanks go out also to my partner in life, Marjan, who helped me to stay sane during lockdowns, and helped build the ideas put forward in this book. Thank you for listening. This is also true for my friends at the Tilburg University Department of Sociology, especially the Juniors. Thank you for the outstanding company during summer schools, conferences, lunch breaks, after-work drinks and for all the help in these past four years. I will see you in Kraków. Finally, I want to thank my family. They helped me escape the academic bubble and put my work – small as it is – into a broader perspective. I dedicate this work to all of you.

Publieke samenvatting

De discussie over het verstrekken van "gratis geld voor iedereen" is in het afgelopen decennium wereldwijd opnieuw opgelaaid. Een onvoorwaardelijk basisinkomen voor iedereen heeft enorme gevolgen voor de bestaande sociale zekerheid: een enkele uitkering vervangt een waaier aan regelingen en toeslagen, de controle op uitkeringsfraude en ook de werkplicht verdwijnt. De invoering van een echt basisinkomen lijkt voorlopig ver weg. Maar het feit dat dit voorstel überhaupt aandacht krijgt en zelfs een rol speelt in de hervorming van beleid opent de deur naar een frisse kijk op verzorgingsstatelijke politiek. Sociaal beleid wordt blijkbaar niet alleen bepaald door onderhandelingen achter gesloten deuren, tussen gevestigde belangengroepen zoals politieke partijen, vakbonden en werkgevers. Journalisten en activisten spelen schijnbaar ook een actieve rol in de totstandkoming van hervormingen. Dit proefschrift bekijkt zowel het politiek-maatschappelijk draagvlak voor het basisinkomen en de discussie op (sociale) media in Nederland, om te achterhalen hoe het basisinkomen een geloofwaardig alternatief werd voor de bestaande sociale zekerheid.

De conclusie van dit proefschrift is drieledig. Allereerst toon ik aan dat draagvlak voor het basisinkomen onder zowel politici als burgers nauwelijks verandert. De politieke kleur van voor- en tegenstanders van het basisinkomen is nauwelijks veranderd sinds de vorige discussie in de jaren 80 (H4). De burger ziet daarnaast dezelfde issues in het basisinkomen als in de bredere verzorgingsstatelijke discussie: de eerlijke herverdeling van inkomens, het gevaar van uitkeringsfraude en het recht op een uitkering (H2). Burgers laten zich bovendien nauwelijks beïnvloeden door argumenten van voor- en tegenstanders, zelfs wanneer ze weinig weten van het beleidsvoorstel (H5). De veranderende

geloofwaardigheid van het basisinkomen lijkt dus weinig te maken te hebben met verschuivingen in het politieke landschap.

In plaats daarvan wijs ik naar de wisselwerking tussen media en (lokale) politiek. De geloofwaardigheid van het basisinkomen heeft alles te maken met de manier waarop het voorstel zelf is veranderd. Het basisinkomen is een paraplu-begrip dat veel verschillende voorstellen – soms met omgekeerde uitkomsten – schaart onder dezelfde noemer. Waar het basisinkomen in de jaren 80 vooral draaide om bestaanszekerheid, draait de recente discussie om het vereenvoudigen van het stelsel en het effectief terugdringen van uitkeringsafhankelijkheid (H3;H4). Het basisinkomen vond opnieuw ingang als een "gederadicaliseerd" voorstel dat aansluit op bestaande beleidsdoelen rondom activering en participatie.

Tegelijkertijd verandert de basisinkomen-discussie ook mede het denken over hetzelfde activeringsbeleid. In de basisinkomen-discussie (en de daaropvolgende experimenten met een regelarme bijstand) worden activerende verplichtingen zoals de tegenprestatie juist gezien als een bron van stress en wantrouwen (H3). Het loslaten van sancties en verplichtingen wordt in plaats daarvan gepresenteerd als een alternatieve vorm van activering. Hiermee heeft de discussie bijgedragen aan de toegenomen aandacht voor de "menselijke maat" in de bijstand. Het basisinkomen heeft zich daarmee in de discussie dus aangepast aan de bestaande beleidsdoelen, maar geeft tegelijkertijd ook een nieuwe invulling aan het begrip activering, en werkt zo door in de ontwikkeling van sociaal beleid.

Summary

Over the past decade, the proposal for an Unconditional and Universal Basic Income (UBI) has gained credibility in policy-making circles, to the surprise of many welfare state scholars. The UBI proposal is "disarmingly simple" but implies radical reforms to existing social security: to provide all citizens with a regular cash benefit with no strings attached – provocatively called "free money for everyone". In this dissertation I set out to investigate the remarkable shift in the credibility of UBI, apparently turning from a "crackpot idea" to a legitimate policy alternative. This comprehensive study includes both popular support and public debate: whereas popular support is thought to enable and constrain the formation of policy coalitions, the legitimacy of the proposal is also constructed in public (media) debate. I employ a mix of data and methods to explore the legitimation of this radical policy proposal.

The main takeaway of this work is threefold. First, the popular support for UBI is remarkably stable and coherent: constituencies and key demographics are remarkably unambiguous in their support for and opposition to UBI (see Chapter 2), and are not so easily convinced of the competing arguments that are put forward in the public debate (see Chapter 5). Instead, when forming opinions on the UBI proposal, constituencies fall back on the familiar conflicts of social justice that characterize welfare politics – who deserves what and under which conditions. This contradicts the multidimensional perspective on UBI policy, which holds that support for UBI policy is ambiguous because the public is conflicted in their support for various aspects of the proposal. This finding also goes against some framing studies, which argue that frames strongly influence popular opinion. Instead

of support being highly ambivalent and fickle, my analyses show that constituencies draw on the historical conflicts that characterize welfare politics when forming opinions on the UBI proposal. Much like the political coalition for UBI, popular support for UBI is largely gridlocked in institutionalized welfare controversies, a landscape of welfare compromises and frozen conflicts that is hard to change.

Rather than seeking the legitimation of UBI in voter dynamics, my work suggests that the credibility of UBI should be sought in the "struggle over interpretation" in public debate. My analysis of the UBI debate on Dutch Twitter shows a reframing of the radical proposal in terms of activation of and social investment in the unemployed (see Chapters 3 and 4). While the automation narrative is perhaps the best known 'discursive innovation' in the UBI debate – envisioning a utopian world without human labour – the role of automation in the Twitter debate has been relatively marginal. UBI proponents instead pushed arguments on activation and deregulation to the centre of the debate: the broadly shared critique of inefficient and perverse welfare bureaucracies – including activation policies – was leveraged to justify a more cooperative and trustful approach to social assistance. On the one hand this turn to social investment shows that the UBI debate shifted away from the radical utopian ideals endorsed by some proponents, towards the accepted language of social investment. On the other hand, the turn to social investment can also be viewed as a gradual step towards the revolutionary ideals underlying the radical case for UBI. The public policy debate seems to have played an important part in justifying a more positive approach towards activating the unemployed, and may over time – with continued attention – amount to a fundamental transformation of power relations embedded in the welfare state.

The ambiguity surrounding UBI and the corresponding lack of political entrenchment seem to have facilitated the social investment turn in the UBI debate. In contrast to many other social policy issues, the proposal can be framed to suit the interests of almost every party on the political spectrum in one form or another. Throughout my work I find that societal elites and the general public are equally ambivalent

towards UBI, both in their ambiguity towards the proposal (Chapter 2) and in their response to competing frames (Chapter 5). While this conceptual flexibility is often presented as an obstacle to the formation of political coalitions, it can also be seen as a strength. In the third chapter of this dissertation I show in detail how proponents framed UBI as "beyond left and right". While this strategy failed in building a cross-partisan political coalition for the proposal, the ambiguity did allow the framing as a social investment policy. Without strong commitments from political parties and with a range of arguments available, policymakers were able to leverage the momentum for UBI to start experiments with unconditional social assistance under the guise of activating the unemployed. Without the ambiguity in its framing and the division amongst political elites, the policy experiments would have been more likely to strand in the gridlock of welfare politics.

While there is a particular disconnect between public debate and popular support, the public debate at least seems to have some influence on the policy process. Over the course of its legitimation, perhaps thanks to its conceptual flexibility, the concept of UBI was 'deradicalized' to fit with the dominant welfare paradigm on activation and social investment. Simultaneously, the ideas about activating the unemployed are also gradually shifting from sanctions and incentives towards cooperation and trust. To build on the analogy by Wright (2012): a fish may alter the ecosystem, but the ecosystem also alters the fish. UBI had an impact on the policy process that may build over time, but the radical wings of the UBI proposal have been clipped as the proposal was fitted into the dominant paradigm of targeted activation. Time will tell whether the genes of UBI are strong enough to make a lasting impact on the social policy discourse.

1 Introduction

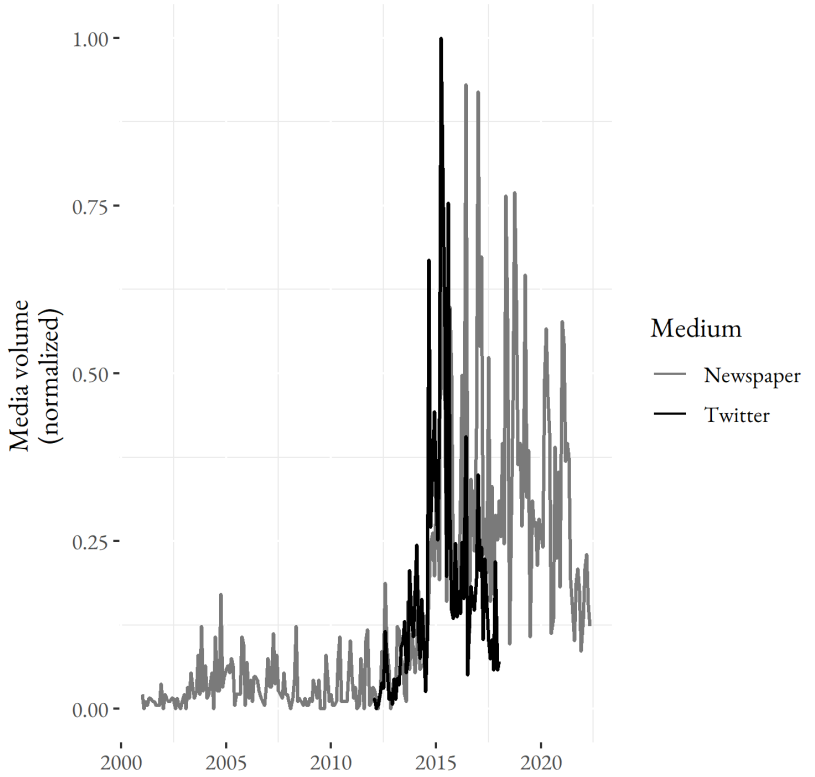
> "A pond contains many species of fish, insects, and plants. Sometimes an alien species is introduced to an ecosystem and it thrives; sometimes it does not." (Erik Olin Wright 2012:9)

1 • THE REVIVAL OF UNIVERSAL BASIC INCOME

The debate surrounding a universal and unconditional basic income (UBI) has witnessed a remarkable revival in recent years. In the aftermath of the financial crisis the radical welfare reform proposal suddenly gained attention in the media across the western world (e.g. Perkiö, Rincón & van Draanen 2019). Activists brought UBI to a vote in a binding referendum in Switzerland and set up a citizens' initiative to implement UBI on a European level (Liu 2020). The UBI proposal was featured as a flagship proposal in several political campaigns, most notably in the United States presidential primaries (Yang 2018), and amongst the elected populist parties in Spain and Italy (Bickerton & Accetti 2018:134; cf. De Wispelaere 2016:133). Policy experiments with unconditional social assistance popped up across Europe (Bollain et al. 2019), including in Finland (Kangas 2021), Barcelona, Scotland, and the United States (Rhodes 2018). Even the international policy organization OECD expressed its interest in a policy brief (Browne & Immervoll 2017).

The Netherlands has witnessed a particularly active and consequential revival of the UBI discussion. Following an earlier peak of interest in the 1980s (Groot & Van der Veen 2000), the discussion was revived

FIGURE 1.1 Monthly volume of newspaper articles and tweets mentioning Universal Basic Income



Sources: Newspaper articles retrieved from LexisNexis Academic database in May 2021. Tweets retrieved from the Twitter search engine in January 2018.

by fringe journalism (Tegenlicht 2014) and amplified by Twitter audiences. Figure 1.1 shows a surge in attention around 2015, which stays strong for several years before receding. Groot and Van der Veen (2000) have compared the cycle of attention for UBI to a "peat fire" that reignites in times of high unemployment. This time around, however, in response to the media attention for UBI and the public push

for experimenting with such a policy, a dozen of Dutch municipalities started "basic income inspired" experiments with unconditional social assistance (Groot, Muffels & Verlaat, 2019:280; see also Van der Veen 2019). In many municipalities, these experiments marked a loss of faith in the effectiveness of "stick and carrot" incentives and seem to have set the stage for a more positive approach to supporting and enabling the unemployed (Roosma 2022).

In conjunction with the revival of the discussion, also the community surrounding UBI has become more international and specialized. The UBI proposal has transformed from what was seen as "yet another crackpot idea of the radical left" (De Wispelaere & Stirton 2004:266) to a proposal increasingly discussed – although not always endorsed – by welfare state scholars. Before the turn of the century, the UBI proposal ignited a philosophical debate, sometimes with activist tendencies, on whether or not unconditional and universal benefits constitute some form of social justice (e.g. Van Parijs 1991; for an overview see Widerquist et al. 2013). In recent years, an increasing number of scholars are tending to specialized questions with empirically informed answers such as the redistributive implications of UBI (Hoynes & Rothstein 2019; Browne & Immervoll 2017), policy experiments that test the behavioural effects of unconditional transfers (e.g. Groot, Muffels & Verlaat 2019), the formation of political coalitions (De Wispelaere 2016; Roosma 2022) and the popular support for UBI reforms (e.g. Roosma & Van Oorschot 2020).

2 • LEGITIMATING A RADICAL POLICY PROPOSAL

The surge in attention for the UBI proposal came as a surprise to many scholars of the welfare state. The welfare debate in Europe has revolved around targeting and activation for decades (Gilbert 2002; Taylor-Gooby 2008; Hemerijck 2018). Such policies intend to manage the structural and financial pressures facing social security (see Laenen, Meuleman & Van Oorschot 2020) in ways generally seen as socially just: by targeting welfare provision to deserving groups such as the poor and disabled while incentivizing labour market re-entry amongst

the able-bodied population (Slothuus 2007; Van Oorschot, Roosma, Meuleman & Reeskens 2017). UBI policy, on the other hand, proposes to provide benefits "to every citizen", "young or old, able or disabled", and "paid regardless of whether the recipient is working, willing to work, or has a work record" (Widerquist et al. 2013:xiii-xiv). In the Netherlands, such a policy has been provocatively labelled "free money for everyone" (Bregman 2014). The UBI proposal gained legitimacy as a radical alternative to targeted activation policies despite the institutionalized controversies surrounding universal and unconditional welfare.

Moreover, UBI policy is not primarily endorsed by political elites, but driven from the bottom up by activism and fringe journalism. A well-known case is Switzerland, where activists campaigned to bring the proposal to a vote in a binding referendum (Liu 2020). In the Netherlands, the temporal order of events implies that the UBI debate was instigated by fringe journalism and amplified on Twitter. The policy proposal went viral on Twitter before (again) reaching politicians, in response to publications from Rutger Bregman (2014) and a documentary series by the future-affairs program Tegenlicht (2014; 2015). After the third episode aired, local politics entered the debate on Twitter. In response to the attention for UBI and the lobby for experimenting with such a policy, a dozen of Dutch municipalities announced experiments with unconditional social assistance. In short, the public debate facilitated the setup of "basic income inspired" policy experiments in the Netherlands (Groot & Muffels & Verlaat 2019; see also Van der Veen 2019).

Inspired by this unexpected course of events, this dissertation aims to unravel the UBI debate in the Netherlands, seeking to understand whether and how such a radical proposal came to be perceived as legitimate by the public and in public debate. In bringing together the study of popular support and the study of public debate, I apply two related but distinct perspectives to the social legitimacy of the UBI proposal. In the remainder of this introduction, I discuss the theoretical background and research questions before moving to the methodological approach developed to answer these questions.

3 • A DUAL PERSPECTIVE ON LEGITIMACY

The legitimacy of the welfare state in general, and the legitimacy of UBI policy in particular, have been studied both from the perspective of popular support and the perspective of public debate. Since both perspectives help us to understand why UBI went from a "crackpot idea" (De Wispelaere & Stirton 2004:266) to a legitimate policy alternative, I combine the two perspectives as shown in the overview in Figure 1.2. The rectangles in this figure represent (groups of) actors, while the circles represent ideas and ideologies. The arrows represent a (theoretical) causal relationship. The research questions also relate to these two perspectives. First, popular support both enables and constrains what is politically feasible: the support of constituencies can make or break the political coalitions that implement reforms. In an attempt to understand to what extent and why constituencies are ambiguous towards UBI, I ask the first question:

RQ1: Which welfare controversies structure popular support for the UBI proposal?

Second, the legitimacy of the UBI proposal is also constructed in public debate, where actors organize to endorse or discredit policy proposals. I investigate the UBI debate on Dutch Twitter, a particular platform for public discussion, to explore:

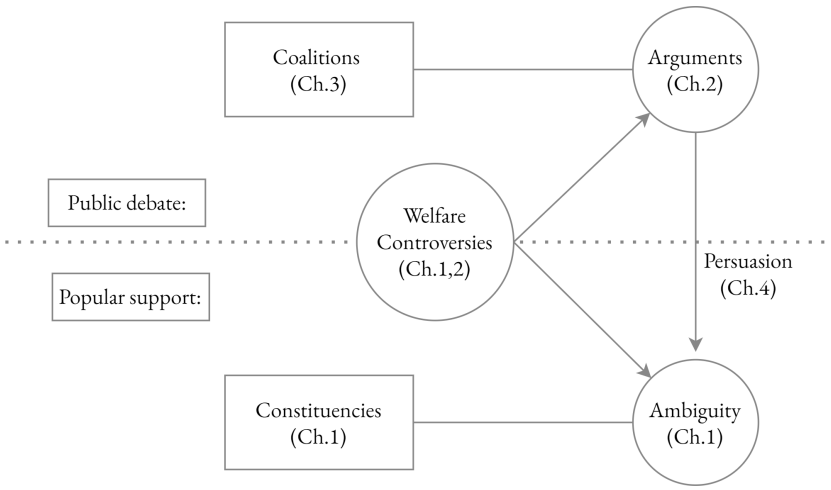
RQ2: Which arguments are used to endorse and oppose the UBI proposal in the debate on Dutch Twitter?

and

RQ3: Which discursive coalitions emerge in the debate on Dutch Twitter, and which political representatives endorse these positions?

While the study of popular support and public debate are part of largely separate theoretical and methodological traditions there is also

FIGURE I.2 Conceptual Overview



a connection between the two. In an attempt to connect the discursive struggle in public debate to the formation of popular support, I investigate:

RQ4: How does frame competition influence political polarization in support for UBI policy?

Moreover, throughout several chapters in this dissertation, I investigate the connection between public debate and popular support. While both are believed to be grounded in institutionalized welfare controversies, the uninformed public is often considered to be less ideologically coherent (see Chapter 1) and more persuadable (see Chapter 4) than those engaging in public debate. In the remainder of this section, I elaborate on the theoretical background leading up to these research questions.

Popular support

The popular aspect of legitimacy revolves mainly around constituen-

cies – and formally organized publics more generally – that support or oppose welfare policies. In the following, I briefly describe the institutionalist theories underlying the study of welfare support, and my contribution to the literature on UBI support in particular.

Constituencies were initially seen as a driver of welfare state development. Power resource theories ascribed the diverging welfare state trajectories ascribed to the political power struggle between organized labour and capital (Esping-Andersen 1990; Korpi 2006). Across Europe, the political conflict on "who should get what and why" (Van Oorschot 2000; see also Houtman 1997) developed in society over generations of political struggle and led to the organization of political parties, unions and policy programs. Welfare programs developed in a bargaining process between organized interests such as political parties, unions and business interests. The greater the political power of organized labour – i.e. unions and labour parties – the more interventionist social policies are implemented to increase the income security of the working and middle classes. Welfare states resolved conflict and fostered cooperation between workers and employers, based on a social contract – sometimes referred to as a moral economy – that promised social security and fair wages in return for work participation (e.g. Svallfors 2010; Mau 2003; Taylor-Gooby et al. 2019; see also Hall & Soskice 2001). The welfare state is consequently seen as the institutionalized outcome of a historical class struggle: a constellation of social policies and norms that reflect economic and moral compromises on social security.

Popular support is nowadays more often conceived as a constraint to welfare reforms. During the 1980s the European welfare state entered a mode of retrenchment and permanent austerity (e.g. Taylor-Gooby 2002), and "policy feedback" became the dominant explanation for welfare state development – or rather the lack of development (Pierson 1993; Soroka & Wlezien 2010; see also Béland & Schlager 2019). High unemployment and an ageing population made welfare increasingly unaffordable, and the welfare state was increasingly held responsible for disrupting the economy and undermining social solidarity (Arts, Halman & Van Oorschot 2003). Rather than being dismantled, how-

ever, welfare states persisted (Brooks & Manza 2006) and increasingly converged in their approach to providing a targeted and activating form of social security (e.g. Taylor-Gooby 2008). The persistence of welfare states inspired a new wave of scholarship that attributed more autonomy to the state and redirected its attention towards internal policy-making processes (Skocpol 1992). As a result, Pierson (1993) argued on the one hand that popular support *constrains* welfare reform: the public had by now a strong vested interest in the welfare state, and political representatives were seeking to avoid the electoral punishment that would follow unpopular cuts in welfare expenditure. On the other hand, with the policy reforms now largely detached from public influence, popular support *responds* to the reforms implemented (Laenen 2018; see also Soroka & Wlezien 2010).

Welfare scholars have accordingly sought to demonstrate the constraints and responsiveness in popular support for the UBI proposal. These studies view the popular commitment to targeted activation policies as an institutionalized obstacle to implementing UBI policy (e.g. Roosma & Van Oorschot 2020; Vlandas 2021). A particular set of studies focuses on the dimensionality of the UBI proposal (Chrisp, Laenen & Van Oorschot 2020), using innovative survey experiments to demonstrate how popular support would shift in response to tweaks in policy design. These studies generally find that the public prefers targeted activation policies over universal and unconditional welfare provision. In particular, the public on average supports targeting permanent residents and the poor over universal provision (Stadelmann-Steffen & Dermont 2020; Rincón 2021; see also Bay & Pedersen 2006), and supports reciprocal obligations job-search or unpaid work over unconditional provision. (Rincón, Vlandas & Hiilamo 2022; Laenen, van Hootegem & Rossetti 2022). So far it seems that public acceptance of UBI requires abandoning the unconditional and universal core of the policy proposal. These studies confirm that in securing popular support for UBI we cannot escape the historical legacy of the welfare state – i.e. the institutionalized morals and interests that structure public opinion.

Chapter 2 contributes to this literature by investigating to what

extent welfare controversies – i.e. institutionalized interests and values – drive popular support for UBI. Studies of welfare support are increasingly recognizing that attitudes towards welfare policies are to some extent ambivalent, as a consequence of competing moral or rational considerations (see e.g. Feldman & Zaller 1992). For example, people may support far-reaching government involvement while being critical of the inefficiencies and unintended consequences of welfare provision (Svallfors 2010; Roosma, Gelissen & Van Oorschot 2013). Similarly, supporting the right to welfare benefits does not necessarily exclude the support of reciprocal obligations tied to welfare provision (Gielens, Roosma & Achterberg 2019; cf. Laenen & Meuleman 2019). Support for the UBI proposal is arguably even more ambivalent because it is often presented as an extensive overhaul of the welfare system, replacing many targeted policies with a single universal and unconditional benefit (e.g. Martinelli 2020). Unfortunately, the survey experiments done so far are by design the dimensions distinguished by the general public, or in more technical terms, they have no data on the commonalities in support between policy aspects. As a result, we still know little about to what extent support for UBI is unambiguously supported or rejected, and which welfare controversies drive the ambiguity in support for the UBI proposal. A study of welfare controversies identifies the common ambiguities underlying UBI support and helps to show why core constituencies and demographics would or would not want to implement a UBI. I thus first set out to investigate:

RQ1: Which welfare controversies structure popular support for the UBI proposal?

Public debate

The discursive aspect of legitimacy revolves around the public debate, where actors organize to frame policy ideas. Discursive institutionalism emphasizes that reform imperatives are *constructed* in the debates that follow real-world events (Schmidt 2008; Béland 2009; for an alternative approach see Shanahan et al. 2018). The imperative to reform

is not directly driven by objective shocks such as high unemployment rates and financial pressure: these objective events must be perceived as a credible threat (Cox 2001:474). In public debate, journalists, experts and politicians – sometimes called policy entrepreneurs – frame proposals in line with particular values and interests in an attempt to build political coalitions and mobilize support amongst constituencies. (Béland 2016:741; see also Hajer 2002:44). The interpretative struggle in public debate (e.g. Campbell 2002:28-9), frames are also used to undermine the credibility of the proposal. The outcome of this interpretative struggle is in part decided by the strength of the arguments presented (e.g. Chong & Druckman 2007a) and in part decided by the strength of the coalitions involved (e.g. Uitermark, Traag & Bruggeman 2016). Discursive institutionalism thus brings together coalitions and frames, two sources of legitimate power that are typically analysed in isolation.

Media frames are cognitive instruments used to influence the interpretation of an issue by invoking particular considerations over others (Entman 1993:53), broadly considered a central form of power in debates. Frames are used by social movements to organize dissent (Snow et al. 2014) and by political elites to manipulate public opinion (Chong & Druckman 2007b). Also in the UBI literature, frames are considered important instruments to legitimize the policy proposal (De Wispelaere & Noguera 2012:29; Perkiö 2020a). The few studies published in this field so far show a remarkable disconnect in the interpretation of the policy in media and politics. A common tendency in the media coverage of UBI has been framing the proposal as a solution to the threat of automated labour to the work-based system of social security. The automation narrative has "helped to put [UBI] on the agenda" (Perkiö Rincón & van Draanen 2019:247) in several Western countries. Carroll and Engel (2021:423) similarly attribute the lack of attention for UBI in Australian newspapers to the omission of the automation narrative by the predominantly conservative media outlets. Meanwhile, the discussion in the political arena has centred on the adoption of UBI as a more efficient and effective alternative to targeted activation policies (Perkiö 2020b; Roosma 2022).

Chapter 3 of this dissertation contributes to the study of framing UBI, by examining the arguments used to endorse and oppose the UBI proposal on Dutch Twitter. In the Netherlands, the UBI proposal went viral on Twitter before (again) reaching newspapers and policymakers, suggesting that something happened on the platform that led to its political legitimation. Moreover, Dutch Twitter is composed of a disproportionate number of academics, journalists and political elites on the one hand, but also of politically motivated audiences on the other hand (e.g. Wieringa et al. 2018; see also Himelboim, McCreery & Smith 2013). While the influence of political elites and journalists is still disproportionate in the new media environment (see Hindman 2008), Twitter audiences have an active role in amplifying particular issues and frames (e.g. Zhang et al. 2018). The UBI debate on Dutch Twitter will show how journalists, elites and audiences frame the proposal together, shedding light on the welfare controversies that motivate and undermine the legitimacy of the UBI proposal in public debate.

RQ 2: Which arguments are used to endorse and oppose the UBI proposal in the debate on Dutch Twitter?

The coalitions behind these frames are the second component of discursive power. Hajer (2002:45) emphasizes that the arguments in debates are not isolated elements, but relate to narratives used to defend or oppose a position of interest in the debate. The dominance of one position over another lies in the extent to which their perspectives on the issue are adopted. More recently, Uitermark, Traag and Bruggeman (2016) argue that the influence of particular coalitions depends on the leadership and discursive coherence – i.e. the consistency of the narrative – which determines their ability to attract support and withstand criticism in the discussion. This line of research suggests that the legitimacy of policy proposals, or the (lack of) credibility of particular positions, depends also on the discursive coalitions that emerge in public debate.

These discursive coalitions are also very relevant in the case of UBI,

which has been subject to a "struggle over interpretation" of its own (Perkiö 2012; see also Roosma 2022). UBI policy has been advocated by those on the very left as well as those on the very right. While some authors have taken this broad advocacy as evidence for the possibility to unite the left and right behind a single welfare proposal (e.g. Reed & Lansley 2016), more in-depth accounts of these debates point out that advocates on the left and right have very different proposals in mind (e.g. Chrisp & Martinelli 2019; De Wispelaere & Stirton 2004). On opposite extremes, two interpretations of UBI policy compete: one of "real" freedom affiliated with the political ideologies of the pro-left (Van Parijs 1991) and another of deregulation in line with the ideologies of libertarian right (Friedman 2013 [1968]). More recently, Fouksman and Klein (2019) have suggested "two paths" in line with the more recent discussions on UBI as a solution to the automation of labour and as a social investment policy. In any case, the UBI proposal is a contested concept that can be framed to suit many interests and ideologies.

Chapter 4 contributes to the coalitional aspect of UBI legitimacy, by investigating the positions of political representatives in the interpretative struggle surrounding UBI on Dutch Twitter. Discourse coalitions are the driving force in every debate, and their collective action decides which interpretation (or frames) dominates the discussion. The coalition formation surrounding UBI has been described in several narrative accounts, illustrating the ambiguous position of trade unions (e.g. Vanderborght 2006), the liberal-conservative commitment to the retrenchment programme (Groot & Van der Veen 2000:203), "the discontent with the bureaucratic burdens and the high implementation costs" amongst policy-makers (Van der Veen 2019:3), the agenda-setting influence of experts and research groups (Sloman 2018) and more generally the "persistent division" of politicians towards UBI (De Wispelaere 2016). However, whereas framing studies focus exclusively on the arguments in the debate, the narrative accounts do not do justice to the interpretative struggle that is taking place in the media. Combining (elite) actors and frames, discursive coalitions describe who

contributes to which position, and which arguments are at the centre of the debate.

RQ3: Which discursive coalitions emerge in the debate on Dutch Twitter, and which political representatives endorse these positions?

The (dis)Connection

The discussion so far has treated popular support and public debate as separate phenomena, which they are to an important extent. However, popular policy support is broadly considered to be influenced by public debate. The media are by far the most prominent source of political and policy information for constituencies and the population in general. The frames presented in media debates have some persuasive capacity, changing the perception and support for policy proposals (e.g. Chong & Druckman 2007a) However, this does not mean that media frames directly translate to popular beliefs. Aside from whether or not people accept the arguments presented in the media (e.g. Kunda 1990), popular support is often considered to be less constrained by political ideologies (Converse 2006 [1964]; Feldman & Zaller 1992): the general public is thought to be more ambivalent and more easily persuaded than the typically more elite participants in public debate.

Under the right conditions, frames in the media can persuade constituencies. Media frames influence the audience's interpretation of an issue, by guiding attention to particular aspects of the issue (Entman 1991; Chong & Druckman 2007a). In turn, such a shift in issue interpretation may persuade audiences to favour or oppose issues by altering or reinforcing a particular interpretation of an issue (e.g. Scheufele & Tewksbury 2007). Frames are usually considered to be persuasive when they resonate with their receivers' prior beliefs (e.g. Snow et al. 2014). As in most real policy discussions, however, the process of framing and persuasion is complicated by the competition between frames (e.g. Sniderman & Theriault 2004; Chong & Druckman 2007b:651; Taber & Lodge 2006). These accounts recognize that the public holds distinct and sometimes conflicting opinions towards different policy aspects

(e.g. Meffert, Guge & Lodge 2004; Feldman & Zaller 1992). Moreover, they argue that the public processes frames through motivated reasoning – i.e. seeking to form an accurate or value-consistent opinion – relying on mental shortcuts such as the identity and credibility of the sender in the process (e.g. Kunda 1990; Slothuus & de Vreese 2010; Druckman & McGrath 2019).

UBI framing studies are also based on the premise that the debate has "a profound impact on the nature and degree of popular support or opposition to the issue" (Perkiö Rincón & van Draanen 2019:238). Unfortunately, there is very little evidence on framing effects and persuasion in the case of UBI. The few existing studies have so far been focussed on direct effects, showing in particular that arguments against UBI – concerning immigration, work incentives and affordability – tend to erode support while arguments in favour do not build support (Bay & Pedersen 2006; Jordan, Ferguson & Haglin 2022). In terms of political constituencies, especially conservative voters – who are broadly considered opponents of the UBI proposal – react strongly to counterarguments while being insensitive even to conservative arguments in favour (Jordan, Ferguson & Haglin 2022; Yeung 2022).

In an attempt to connect the interpretative struggle in public debate to the popular support for the UBI proposal, I investigate how competing frames influence the political polarization of UBI support. In actual discourse, support is shaped by competing frames that endorse and discredit policy proposals, which influences their persuasiveness (e.g. Druckman 2022:77; Sniderman & Theriault 2004:145). The influence of such competitive persuasion on public opinion is essential to understand how the ongoing public debate influences voter positions on UBI policy, and by extension the legitimacy of UBI policy. However, the still relatively scarce studies on competing frames (see Amsalem & Zoizner 2022) emphasize politically entrenched issues with clear partisan endorsements. In contrast, UBI is marked by internal political division (De Wispelaere 2016) and competing interpretations (Chrisp & Martinelli 2019). This framing experiment thus serves to find out how the "interpretative struggle" influences constituencies:

RQ4: How does frame competition influence political polarization in support for UBI policy?

Public debate and popular support are both grounded in what I refer to as welfare controversies – the institutionalized values and interests related to the welfare state. In the study of welfare support, the public endorses and opposes welfare ideologies such as economic egalitarianism (Jaeger 2006) and reciprocity (e.g. Mau 2003), and more specific experiences such as trust in the functioning of the policy apparatus (Rothstein 1998). In the study of public debates, the dominant "policy paradigm" contains ideas about the problems and goals of welfare policies (e.g. Hall 1993), and "cultural repertoires" influence the strategic adoption of certain arguments over others (e.g. Tilly 2008). The welfare controversies that developed over time – and the interests behind them – crystallize in political ideologies and policy paradigms, shaping both popular attitudes and the public debate.

The central distinction between the general public and the public debate is the difference in knowledge and polarization between them. Public policy debate typically features politicians and experts – and in the case of Twitter also informed audiences – while public opinion often takes shape with less commitment to political ideologies and policymaking concerns. Students of belief systems generally find that the masses organize their political values differently compared to the societal elites that engage in public debate (e.g. Converse 1964; Feldman & Zaller 1992). Converse (1964:9-11) originally theorized that mass belief systems are less 'constrained' due to information loss in the process of elite communication: the "vast treasuries of well-organized information among elites" translate to "a few 'bits'" in the popular understanding. A superficial understanding of political ideology consequently weakens the cognitive link between attitudes among the public at large. Feldman and Zaller (1992:269) referred here to "ideological innocence", the idea that the masses have little if any substantive political knowledge. For the elites, on the other hand, attitudes are "constrained by some structuring principle" (Bartle 2000:469), an elaborate political

ideology that logically connects positions on various issues. The greater ambivalence – or lesser polarization – of the masses is also found in studies on political communication. The general public is thought to be less polarized along political lines compared to the more knowledgeable because they are less skilled at defending their beliefs in the face of contradictory information (Drummond & Fischhoff 2017; see also Kunda 1990). Correspondingly, the uninformed public is thought to be more easily persuaded by media frames (e.g. Sniderman & Thierault 2004:146; Druckman & McGrath 2019; but see Hansen 2007).

This knowledge gap is also apparent in the study of UBI politics. Some studies have expressed "doubts whether respondents fully understand the impact of introducing a [U]BI" (Roosma & Van Oorschot 2020:203) and that "respondents did not show well-developed attitudes towards a UBI" (Rossetti et al. 2020:288). There seems to be a disconnect between the motivations underlying public opinion and public debate. Public opinion studies show UBI is motivated mainly by redistribution (e.g. Roosma & Van Oorschot 2020; Vlandas 2020), and when opting between the two the public generally prefers targets and activation policies over UBI (e.g. Stadelmann-Steffen & Dermont 2020). In public and political debate, the proposal is framed in the context of automated labour (Perkiö, Rincón & van Draanen 2019) and as a tool to activate the unemployed (Perkiö 2020a). Moreover, some unique motives in the public debate do not seem to drive popular support: the threat of automation increases support for redistribution but not for UBI policy (Dermont and Weisstanner 2020) and the work ethic on a country level is not durably related to UBI support (Kozák 2021). On the other hand, an underinformed public seems to be easily persuaded to change position, for example when confronted with deservingness cues and affordability concerns (Bay & Petersen 2006; Jordan, Ferguson & Haglin 2022).

Throughout this dissertation, I study the divide between (mass) popular support and (elite) public debate. In Chapter 2 I investigate to what extent the attitudes towards UBI are more constrained (or less ambivalent) amongst the higher educated in the Netherlands. Moreover, in Chapter 4 I investigate whether the influence of competing frames

differs between those with greater and lesser knowledge. Finally, in the conclusion, I compare the controversies and constituencies behind the popular support for UBI with the arguments and elite positions in the debate on Dutch Twitter.

4 • RESEARCH DESIGN

This dissertation focuses on the Dutch UBI debate and employs a mix of data and methods. I use correlational survey data to investigate the dimensionality of support for UBI (Ch.2) and a survey experiment to investigate the persuasion of constituencies (Ch.5). I collected data on popular support for UBI using the FlyCatcher panel, which is designed to represent a demographically balanced set of Dutch respondents. Designated as the Basic Income Netherlands (BIN) survey, the data is publicly available on Dataverse (Gielens, Roosma & Achterberg 2022).

The public debate is represented by the discussion of UBI on Dutch Twitter. The arguments are identified through a content analysis of tweets (Ch.3) and the coalitions in the debate are identified through a network clustering technique (Ch.4). The public debate is represented by the discussion of UBI on Dutch Twitter. I analyse the tweets posted on three days of peak discussion, reflecting the active public response to the most influential (but selective) media event. The selection of tweets is further discussed in the data section of Chapter 3.

Combining these data sources is valuable from both a theoretical and methodological perspective. Theoretically, the combination of opinion surveys and Twitter data allows me to more or less directly connect and compare popular support and public debate – as also elaborated above. The arguments used in the persuasion experiment are also derived from the Twitter debate, and thus very closely probe the real influence of the UBI debate on popular support in the Netherlands. Moreover, opinion surveys and Twitter are embedded in the same institutional context, and their comparison illustrates the extent to which popular support and public debate are (dis)connected.

Combining opinion surveys and Twitter data also helps to address the shortcomings of survey and media perspectives on legitimacy. Ex-

isting opinion studies rely almost exclusively on survey data, which construct questions based largely on expert knowledge, and thereby risk capturing framing effects, 'creating' preferences rather than measuring pre-existing ones (see also Chapter 2). An analysis of the arguments used on Twitter serves to confirm, correct, and broaden the scope of survey studies on UBI support. The Twitter debate, on the other hand, is a niche and fleeting phenomenon, taking place in a politically polarized environment. The debate represents real events that arguably have a close influence on policy agendas (see Roosma 2022; Groot, Muffels & Verlaat 2019), to find something popular on Twitter is not enough to establish it as legitimate. Opinion surveys are nationally representative and capture longer-term dynamics of support, providing a valuable counterpoint in the legitimation process.

The following chapters in this dissertation are slight adaptations of empirical articles which are either published or under consideration for publication. I have altered the introductions and conclusions of these articles to connect them as chapters.

2 Dimensions of Controversy

The Structure of Popular Support for Universal Basic Income

ABSTRACT

As interest in UBI policy has peaked in recent years, the study of public support for such a policy is rapidly developing. While recent studies recognize the multidimensionality of the UBI proposal, the survey experiments performed so far are by design unable to identify the commonalities in support between policy aspects. As a result, we still know little about to what extent support for UBI is unambiguously supported or rejected, and which welfare controversies drive the ambiguity in support for the UBI proposal. In this chapter, I test several theoretical expectations on the dimensionality of UBI derived from the welfare support literature, through confirmatory factor analysis on the different aspects of UBI policy. Results show that the public holds *related but distinct* opinions towards three dimensions of UBI: universalism – i.e. the question of whether everybody is entitled to the same type and degree of welfare provision, redistribution – regarding the degree of wealth transfer from rich to poor, and unconditionality – the degree of support for strict conditions to enforce the moral obligation to work. The lack of educational differences in attitudinal constraint

This chapter is a slightly adapted version of a publication in the International Journal of Social Welfare: Gielens, E., Roosma, F. & Achterberg, P. (2023) Dimensions of controversy: Investigating the structure of public support for universal basic income in the Netherlands. International Journal of Social Welfare. http://doi.org/10.1111/ijsw.12607"

suggests that these three welfare controversies persist amongst societal elites. Moreover, post hoc comparisons show that the three dimensions differ in their structural bases of support. Universalism is a more liberal issue supported especially by entrepreneurs. Redistribution is an economic issue that unites conservative and leftist voters against liberal and populist constituencies. Inversely, unconditionality is a moral issue that divides the lower-educated liberal-conservative voters and the higher-educated progressive left. Thus, for a broad range of demographics and constituencies, there is both something to like and something to dislike about UBI policy, which leaves room for both compromise and division amongst the public. More generally, I suggest that incorporating the trade-offs between redistribution, targeting and activation elements of welfare policy provides a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of its legitimacy.

1 • INTRODUCTION

Universal Basic Income (UBI) has featured prominently on the agenda of media and politics in recent years. As mentioned in the introduction, the welfare policy proposal was regularly discussed in the media of various countries (Perkiö, Rincón & van Draanen 2019, see also Chapter 3). UBI is seriously considered a policy option (Browne & Immervoll 2017) and inspired several experiments with unconditional social assistance, most notably in Finland (De Wispelaere, Halmetoja & Pulkka 2018) and the Netherlands (Groot, Muffels & Verlaat 2019). This momentum for a universal and unconditional social policy proposal points to a remarkable break in the established welfare discourse (see Taylor-Gooby 2008).

This revival of UBI has inspired many studies into the popular support for UBI policy (De Wispelaere & Noguera 2012). If anything, it has proven challenging to gauge popular support for a policy proposal. Most members of the (European) public are unaware of the policy discussion and have not yet formed an opinion about UBI policy (Rosetti et al. 2020; Chrisp, Pulkka & Rincón 2020:225). To make matters worse, while the UBI proposal itself implies a dramatic

overhaul of the system of social security, the proposal itself is often vague and sometimes contradictory on some aspects (de Wispelaere 2016; De Wispelaere & Stirton 2004). UBI consists of various policy aspects – such as its universality, its unconditionality, its redistributive implications etcetera – some of which are more salient than others. Scholars of UBI support have thus been struggling to measure support for a vaguely defined policy that is relatively unknown amongst the general public.

In addressing this challenge, scholars have applied a multidimensional perspective on UBI support (e.g. Chrisp, Pulkka & Rincón 2020; Stadelmann-Steffen & Dermont 2020; Rincón 2021a). These studies employ survey experiments that provide elaborate descriptions of the proposal and vary the characteristics of the policy proposal, which enables them to study support for different UBI proposals and the effect of individual aspects of these proposals on policy support. The multidimensional policy perspective so far assumes that individual policy aspects – the benefit level, funding mechanisms, eligibility requirements etc. – uniquely influence policy support.

Unfortunately however, the focus on the dimensionality of policy *designs* has come at the cost of neglecting the dimensionality of UBI *support*. In studies of welfare legitimacy, the dimensional structure of attitudes has been leveraged to understand which aspects of welfare policy people distinguish when forming their opinions, such as social rights versus obligations (Gielens, Roosma & Achterberg 2019, Achterberg, Van der Veen & Raven 2014) and policy principles versus implementation (Roosma Gelissen & van Oorschot 2013). Similarly, the commonalities in support for different aspects of UBI will show which dimensions the public distinguishes. Assessing the dimensional structure of UBI support advances the literature in terms of both method and theory. Methodologically, this approach helps to establish a valid measurement of UBI support. Theoretically, the dimensions of support can be interpreted as representing the broader welfare controversies underlying the UBI proposal. Our first contribution is therefore to investigate (RQ1):In line with the first research question of this dissertation, my first contribution is therefore to investigate:

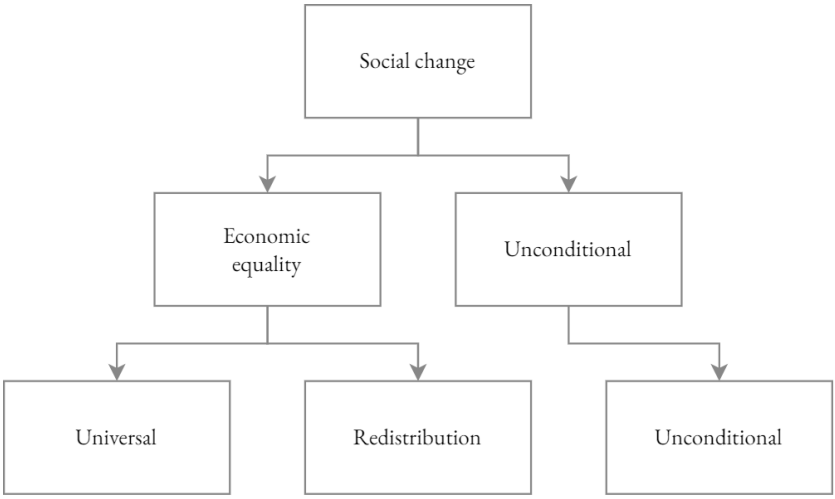
Which welfare controversies underly popular support for the UBI policy proposal?

Secondly, the structure of UBI support also allows us to study educational differences in ambivalence towards the UBI proposal. A number of authoritative studies have pointed to educational differences in political attitudes, arguing that the commitment to a political doctrine aligns the issue stances of political and societal elites (e.g. Converse 1964; Feldman & Zaller 1992; Achterberg & Houtman 2009). For example, amongst the informed and committed elites it is unlikely to find people supporting welfare rights while opposing welfare obligations. The same may be true for UBI support: the higher educated may be more inclined to support or reject UBI as a whole, while the lower educated tend to accept some aspects of the UBI proposal while rejecting others. An educational difference implies that these social categories have a different understanding of UBI. On the one hand this would problematize the one-dimensional measurement of UBI support. On the other hand, establishing a difference in interpretation would have theoretical value – it opens up avenues to explain to what extent support for UBI is vulnerable to framing, why such a public-elite gap exists, and so on. Therefore I additionally investigate:

Are the higher educated less ambivalent in their support for and opposition against Universal Basic Income compared to the lower educated?

In the remainder of this chapter, I first derive expectations on the dimensions of support, and why this dimensionality would differ between educational categories. This is followed by a discussion of my dataset comprised of Dutch respondents, and a methods section elaborating on how a Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) can test these expectations. Moreover, I perform some post-hoc analyses to see whether key constituencies and demographics have different reasons to support the UBI proposal. Finally, I draw conclusions and provide suggestions for future studies.

FIGURE 2.1 Conceptual overview of theorized political controversies underlying UBI support



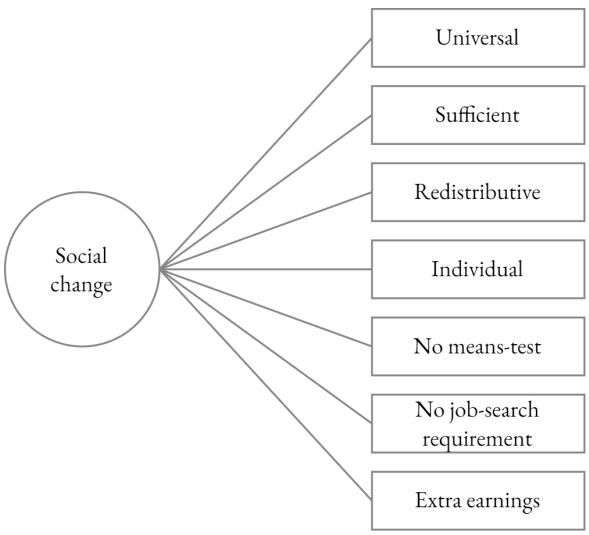
2 • THE DIMENSIONALITY OF UBI SUPPORT

Based on the literature I propose three possible dimensionalities underlying popular support for UBI. A one-dimensional structure tests the assumption of 'conceptual coherence', assuming that the public accepts or rejects UBI as a whole. A two-dimensional structure of support supposes that support for aspects of economic equality is distinct from support for aspects of unconditionality. A three-dimensional model assumes a further differentiation of two elements of economic equality: support for the universalism of UBI and support for the redistribution aspect of UBI. Figure 2.1 shows the conceptual overview of these hypothesized attitudinal structures and I discuss them below.

Conceptual Coherence

The one-dimensional model of UBI support assumes that people tend to either support or reject UBI in all its aspects. Most initial studies assume by necessity that UBI support is one-dimensional (e.g. Roosma

FIGURE 2.2 One-dimensional model of UBI support



& Van Oorschot 2020; Parolin & Siöland 2020; Vlandas 2021), by measuring UBI support using a single question included in the 2018 European Social Survey (ESS8). While the question is preceded by an extensive explanation of the aspects of UBI policy – including the main policy aspects as a guaranteed minimum standard of living, the same for everyone and regardless of work – respondents are unable to disclose their opinion on the various policy aspects. The single-item approach is only valid when individuals tend to show similar levels of support across policy aspects. The test for a one-dimensional model therefore reflects on the validity of early work on UBI support.

I also test the theoretical assumption of 'conceptual coherence' underlying much of the work on UBI. Proponents of UBI policy typically require a combination of different aspects of UBI to achieve its intended purpose. For example, UBI can only amount to "real freedom" (Van Parijs 1991), move away from the "productivism" in current welfare (Offe & Van Parijs 2013) and promote gender equality (e.g. Robeyns 2000) if it is simultaneously universal, sufficient and

unconditional. From this point of view, it makes no sense to support some aspects and reject others. The UBI proposal promises to reform welfare through a combination of measures, and supporting UBI therefore means supporting all of its aspects.

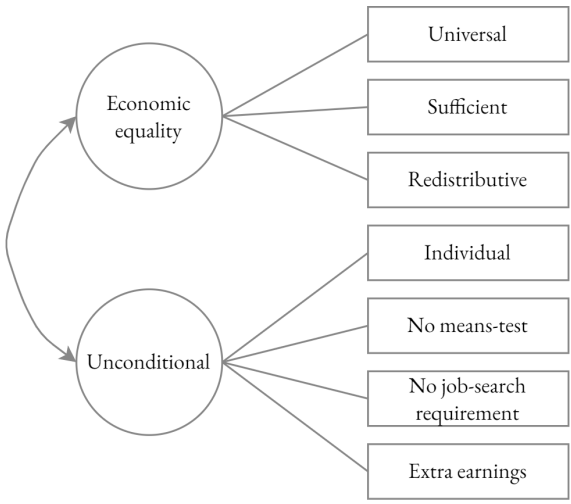
This conceptual coherence may also be found amongst the public at large. Some authors indeed argue that political attitudes – and by extension welfare attitudes – are grounded in the singular desire for (or rejection of) social change (Jost, Federico & Napier 2009; Jost, Ledgerwood & Hardin 2008). Ranging from social conservativism to social progressiveness, these authors argue that people – in the extremes – either want to dismantle the existing societal power structures or maintain them. If UBI is indeed conceptually coherent in the public mind, representing a singular form of social change, I expect that people tend to accept or reject the aspects of UBI policy to the same extent. This leads us to the conceptual model presented in Figure 2.2.

Rights versus Obligations

A two-dimensional structure supposes that people distinguish between social rights and social obligations in their support for UBI, endorsing or opposing the aspects of UBI related to economic equality irrespective of their attitudes towards aspects of unconditionality. Several studies show that attitudes towards social rights and social obligations are part of separate attitudinal dimensions (Achterberg, Van der Veen & Raven 2014; Gielens, Roosma & Achterberg 2019; cf. Laenen & Meuleman 2019).

The first controversy in this model regards economic equality. Many studies have shown that support for welfare policy is grounded in economic egalitarianism (e.g. Jaeger 2006; Svallfors 2010), including support for UBI policy (Roosma & Van Oorschot 2020; Vlandas 2021). This political value dimension embodies opposing stances on the issue of economic equality, with on the one hand the conviction that societal wealth ought to be distributed more equally – particularly to ensure a minimum income as a social right – and on the other hand the belief that income redistribution constitutes an unjustified tax bur-

FIGURE 2.3 Two-dimensional model of UBI support



den. The desire for economic equality is often equated with a position of self-interest – i.e. those benefitting from redistribution are most likely to support egalitarian ideals – but also has a moral component – the conviction that paying taxes to serve the less well-off is a moral obligation to society (Van Oorschot 2002). In sum, this controversy regards attitudes towards the just distribution of societal wealth.

The second hypothesized controversy regards unconditionality, defined as the behavioural and situational requirements for benefit eligibility. Several studies use cultural authoritarianism to explain support for welfare conditionality (e.g. Achterberg, Van der Veen & Raven 2014; Houtman 1997; see also Lipset 1959). Conditions specify rules of eligibility that are at least partly based on a norm of reciprocity, wherein social support is conditional on people's willingness to work (Mau 2003:61). Cultural authoritarians want to prevent the able-bodied from escaping their obligation to work – i.e. they want to prevent welfare abuse – and support strict conditions to enforce these reciprocal obligations. Although this argument is mainly applied to welfare conditionality, instruments such as means-testing also relate

to the notion of welfare abuse. From the authoritarian perspective, means-testing policies prevent the exploitation of social support by those who are not in genuine financial need. In both cases, support for the conditionality of welfare is motivated by the principled desire to prevent welfare abuse.

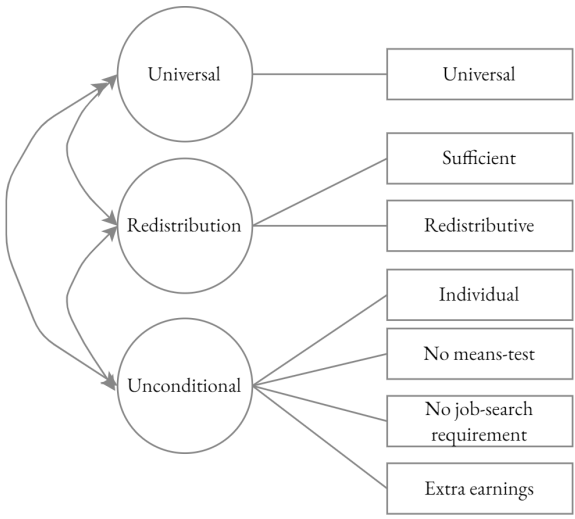
The distinction between economic equality and unconditionality may also apply to support for UBI policy. On the one hand, the UBI proposal entails a movement towards greater economic equality. Providing sufficient benefits, the equal treatment of all citizens, and leveraging income taxes to finance these benefits, all concern the issue of economic equality. Together, these aspects are meant to establish a social right to a minimum-level income. On the other hand, UBI policy abolishes conditions for receiving the benefit; such as means-testing, cohabitation restrictions, the job application requirement and limits on extra earnings. Based on this literature I thus expect a two-dimensional value conflict underlying UBI support, visualized in Figure 2.3.

Targets, Taxes and Obligations

The three-dimensional model makes a further distinction within economic equality between the principle of universalism – i.e. everybody receives the basic income – and attitudes towards the redistributive design of UBI. Universalism deals with the question of who deserves welfare support – the targets of welfare policies – whereas redistribution regards the question of who should pay for these provisions. In other words, this model thus assumes that the public distinguishes a targeting dimension and a taxation dimension of UBI, in addition to the dimension of social obligations.

Universalism regards support for the absence of targets, contending that "everybody is entitled to the same type and degree of welfare provision" (Reeskens & Van Oorschot 2013:1176). Van Oorschot (2006) argues that members of the public vary in the extent to which they prefer strong targets for welfare benefits (see also Laenen & Meuleman 2017). These studies attribute the preference for targeting to the perceived deservingness of the target groups: especially people that

FIGURE 2.4 Three-dimensional model of UBI support



are thought to be in genuine need, due to no fault of their own, and show a willingness to work are deemed more deserving of support. Still, people differ in this respect: conditionality of solidarity – much like authoritarianism – is more strongly present amongst the lower-educated, coinciding with their greater suspicions of welfare abuse (e.g. Van Oorschot 2006). Support for universalism thus originates in the extent to which people differentiate between the deservingness of target groups. Universalism is also a core component of the UBI proposal. UBI is often endorsed as a civil right, for example as compensation for the poor being expropriated (Paine 2004[1797]). Tideman and Vallentyne (2001) similarly defend a universal basic income as a matter of civil rights, the right to a minimum level of income for everyone.

Redistribution deals instead with the question of who contributes and who benefits from the redistributive arrangement. Supporters of redistribution want to reduce the differences in income (and/or wealth) between the rich and the poor, whereas opponents of redistribution prefer low taxes and laissez-faire economics. Support for redistribu-

tion is typically stronger amongst those who stand to benefit from the arrangement, such as the poor and lower educated (e.g. Jaeger 2006). Taken together, the poor and lower educated thus may dislike the universalism of UBI because it serves the rich, and at the same time support the redistributive aspect of UBI because it serves themselves. As also mentioned by Rincón (2021a), this may well be one of the paradoxes (or cross-pressures) underlying UBI support. In accordance, Van Oorschot, Gielens and Roosma (2022) find no relationship between the conditionality of solidarity and economic egalitarianism, suggesting that these attitudinal dimensions are indeed empirically independent of each other. Figure 2.4 presents the three-dimensional model of UBI support.

Educational differences in ambivalence towards UBI

Students of belief systems generally find that the masses organize their political values differently compared to societal elites (e.g. Converse 1964; Feldman & Zaller 1992). Converse (1964:9-11) originally theorized that issue attitudes amongst the public are less constrained by political ideologies, due to information loss in the process of elite communication: the "vast treasuries of well-organized information among elites" translate to "a few 'bits'" in the popular understanding. A superficial understanding of political ideology consequently weakens the cognitive link between attitudes amongst the public at large. Feldman and Zaller (1992:269) emphasize that the general public is more ambivalent or doubtful towards policy issues than their elite counterparts, not for a lack of understanding but due to conflicting considerations. For the elites, on the other hand, attitudes are shaped by the commitment to political ideology, a "structuring principle" that informs the position to take on various issues (Bartle 2000:469). This theory of ambivalence has been empirically validated time and again. Within the welfare state, for example, the higher educated are more likely to support or reject the welfare state as a whole, while the lower educated hold opinions on economic issues that are more or less unrelated to their positions on cultural issues (e.g. Achterberg & Houtman 2009).

The theory of ambivalence implies that the dimensionality of UBI support differs between educational strata. Political parties must take a clear position on UBI proposals – i.e. they accept or reject the policy as a whole, based on the combined implications of different policy aspects. For example, political elites on the proponent side particularly view UBI as a cost-effective and more supportive strategy to activate the unemployed (Perkiö 2020; Groot Muffels & Verlaat 2019). Based on their greater political commitment, the higher educated are prone to align their opinions with the position of the political elites they support: they too become unambiguous supporters or opponents of UBI policy. Inversely, the lower educated are supposed to be more ambivalent, and thus vary more in the UBI aspects they support and reject.

Existing studies point to the validity of this hypothesis, noting a lack of knowledge of UBI amongst the general public. The proportion of 'don't know' responses is over 8% in the ESS8. Even regarding substantial opinions, Roosma & Van Oorschot (2020:203) have "doubts whether respondents fully understand the impact of introducing a BI". This lack of knowledge is confirmed by Rosetti et al. (2020), who after interviewing a random sample of local citizens found that "with few exceptions, respondents did not show well-developed attitudes towards a UBI. Many respondents indicated that they found these topics complicated or that they had never previously thought about the questions asked" (p.288). Consequently, I expect that the attitudes towards UBI are more ambivalent amongst the lower educated.

3 • DATA AND METHODS

Operationalization

The analysis relies on data from the Basic Income Netherlands survey (Gielens, Roosma & Achterberg 2022), designed to represent a demographically balanced set of Dutch respondents. Although the sample is representative of most key demographics, a comparison with population data from Statistics Netherlands (available in Appendix A2)

shows an overrepresentation of people aged between 65-80, citizens without a migration background, and with higher household incomes. However, the overrepresentation of high-income households is likely to be overestimated: non-response of household income is substantially higher amongst lower educated (26.9%) compared to the higher educated (16.9%). Even though the sample is not perfectly representative, the risk of drawing ungeneralizable conclusions is small. The statistical relationships between variables (such as correlations, factor loadings, etcetera) are less vulnerable to sampling error (e.g. Goodman & Blum 1996). The sample contains N=1197 respondents.

Our measurement of UBI policy aspects is based on the most common definition of UBI as "universal, unconditional and individual" (Widerquist et al. 2013:xiv): every citizen receives it, in an equal amount, with no strings attached. This definition of UBI considers UBI to be sufficient to survive without work (Van Parijs 1991) and funded through progressive tax mechanisms (e.g. Tideman & Vallentyne 2017). Moreover, I define UBI in relation to existing welfare policies in the Netherlands, to clarify the policy reforms implied by the liberal-egalitarian proposal.

In particular, I operationalized seven aspects of UBI policy presented in Table 2.1. The items are preceded by the following introductory text: "the universal basic income is composed of several aspects on which we would like to hear your opinion. Indicate what you think about the following aspects". All indicators have answer categories ranging from 1 (very bad idea) to 5 (very good idea), with a middle category of 3 (not good, not bad). First, the policy is defined as *universal*, meaning that "every Dutch citizen will receive a basic income each month". Note that I opt for a monthly cash payment over e.g. one-off cash grants or in-kind benefits. Also, note that I deliberately avoid the issue of immigration by specifying the target group as Dutch citizens. Second, the policy is defined as *sufficient* to survive without working, being "as high as the poverty line (€1200/m)". Third, the policy is defined as *redistributive,* meaning "higher incomes pay back this basic income via taxes". Fourth, the policy is defined as *individual,* so it "does not become higher or lower when you live together". While the

individuality criterion may also refer to household-level payments, the Dutch system already provides most benefits on an individual basis. I instead refer to the cohabitation penalty, which reduces benefits in case of cohabitation. Fifth, the policy has *no means-test,* meaning it is "paid regardless of your income level". I further specify that "because of this it is not necessary to check if people have other sources of income". Although often linked to universalism, means-testing also invokes a discussion about welfare efficiency and welfare abuse. Sixth, the policy allows people to keep *extra earnings*, meaning people can "keep the (net) income earned next to this basic income". This aspect relates to discussions on the 'poverty trap', where incomes fall when recipients start working while receiving benefits. UBI policy removes the income threshold tied to benefit eligibility, enabling e.g. social assistance beneficiaries to work part-time without losing income. Finally, I define UBI as having *no job-search requirement,* so "no service in return is required for receiving this basic income". I specify by stating "recipients are not obliged to apply for jobs when they become unemployed". This criterion operationalizes the unconditional provision of UBI in relation to current social assistance requirements.

In addition, respondents are categorized into three educational strata. The lower educated have no education, completed elementary school, lower secondary school (VMBO) or lower vocational school (MBO 1). The middle educated completed higher secondary school (HAVO/VWO) or the upper levels of vocational school (MBO 2-4). The higher educated obtained a propaedeutic degree in (applied) university, a bachelor's or associate degree in applied science education (HBO), or a university-level bachelor's, master's or doctoral degree.

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

I use confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to test the tenability of the proposed attitudinal structures (for an introduction see Brown & Moore 2012). The standard approach is to decide which model fits best given the observed responses by comparing various fit statistics. Low values for the Akaike information criterion (AIC) and Bayesian information

TABLE 2.1 Descriptive statistics of UBI aspect indicators

Aspect	Full phrasing	Mean	Sd
Universal	*Every adult Dutch citizen will receive a basic income each month*	3.24	1.138
Sufficient	*This basic income is as high as the poverty line (€1200/m)*	3.32	1.058
Redistributive	*Those with higher incomes pay back this basic income via taxes*	3.32	1.203
Individual	*This basic income does not become higher or lower when you live together*	3.35	1.036
No means-test	*This basic income is paid regardless of your income level. Because of this, it is not necessary to check if people have other sources of income*	3.24	1.151
Extra earnings	*You can keep the (net) income earned next to this basic income*	3.70	.984
No job-search requirement	*No service in return is required for receiving this basic income. For example, recipients are not obliged to apply for jobs when they become unemployed*	2.79	1.247
Educational level	Low	0.271	
	Middle	0.335	
	High	0.394	

criterion (BIC) indicate model correspondence with the observed correlational structure. Low values for the Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) and Comparative Fit Index (CFI) point to a high relative improvement

compared to a zero-correlation null model. The Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) and Standardized Root Mean Square Residual are absolute measures of model fit, with values closer to zero indicating better fit. In an influential simulation study, Hu and Bentler (1999) proposed cut-off values of adequate fit for a number of these criteria: CFI and TLI above .95 and RMSEA and SRMR scores below .08 indicate adequate fit. However, especially the RMSEA and SRMR tend to be too conservative, especially for models with few degrees of freedom.

The ambivalence hypothesis – the higher educated have more aligned attitudes towards dimensions of UBI – is tested by comparing the factor correlations between educational groups. In the context of a multi-group CFA, I first compare the fit of a 'metric' model that constrains factor loadings between educational groups with the fit of a 'complete' model that also constrains correlations between latent variables. Correlations are significantly different if the metric model fits better than the complete model. To assess which correlations differ in more detail, I present the unconstrained correlations. The significance of group differences in individual correlations is also done through model likelihood comparison. In this case, I compare a model with all constrained correlations to a model with a single unconstrained correlation.

4 • RESULTS

I start the discussion of results with some interesting tendencies from the descriptive statistics in Table 2.1. First, note that the mean scores on almost all the individual aspects are above the mid-point: the respondents tend towards considering most aspects of UBI a neutral to a good idea. This suggests that UBI support is more stable than expected, eliciting similar levels of support as the 2018 ESS survey (see e.g. Roosma & Van Oorschot 2020). In particular, the mean support for the universal aspect of UBI is surprisingly high, considering the policy discourse focussed on social provisions targeted at the poor (Taylor-Gooby 2008). Second, some aspects are still more supported

than others. The 'extra earnings' aspect generates relatively high mean support (m=3.70) and consensus (s=.984) while relaxing the job application requirement is relatively weakly supported (m=2.79) and is most controversial (s=1.247). This suggests that the public in general wants to remove work disincentives while retaining work incentives. At the same time, however, a substantial part of the population (33.7 per cent) is supportive of relaxing the job-search requirement, versus 45.7 per cent opposed. The aspect is thus controversial, with a tendency towards maintaining the job-search requirement. Finally, the redistributive aspect of UBI policy has a relatively high standard deviation (s=1.203), testifying to its controversial nature. The redistribution of income traditionally divides the political left and right.

Dimensionality

Next, I test which hypothesized dimensional structure is most likely given the data. The one-dimensional model of UBI support is most convincingly rejected. The likelihood ratio test indicates a significantly better fit of the multidimensional models ($\Delta\chi2(1)=126.0$, $p<.001$). The relative indices CFI and TLI are both well below the goodness-of-fit thresholds of 90 or 95 per cent improvement over the null model and lower than the relative fit of the multidimensional models. The absolute fit indices also point to a rejection of this model in favour of the multidimensional models. The RSMEA and SRMR both exceed the accepted thresholds (<.05) and the RMSEA is also significantly higher than the 0.08 threshold. All statistics point to the rejection of the one-dimensional model as the best empirical fit, supporting the claim that UBI support is not well-captured as an undifferentiated attitude. This casts doubt on the theoretical and empirical assumptions made in the field of UBI support: the conceptual coherence ascribed to UBI is not shared by the public in general, and single-item measures are prone to bias the 'true' level of support for UBI policy.

Based on model fit I accept the three-dimensional model – separating attitudes on universalism, redistribution and unconditionality – as the best fit. Although adding the third dimension leads to consid-

TABLE 2.2 Goodness-of-fit indices of hypothesized models (CFA)

	One-dimensional	Two-dimensional	Three-dimensional	Four-dimensional	Three-dimensional modified
df	14	13	12	11	10
X^2	332.8	206.8	188.9	187.4	110.8
$\Delta\chi^2$		126.0***	17.8***	1.6	78.1***
CFI	0.892	0.935	0.940	0.940	0.966
TLI	0.839	0.894	0.896	0.886	0.929
AIC	22945	22821	22804	22805	22731
BIC	23016	22897	22886	22891	22822
RMSEA	0.138	0.112	0.111	0.116	0.092
SRMR	0.058	0.053	0.051	0.052	0.039

erably less improvement than adding a second dimension, still, the likelihood ratio test shows a significant improvement in the fit of the model ($\Delta\chi2(1)=17.8$, $p<.001$). However, the three-dimensional model does not yet meet the rules of thumb of an adequate model fit. CFI and TLI indicate less than 95 per cent improvement over the zero-correlation restricted null model. RMSEA exceeds the .08 threshold for acceptable fit, which means that the hypothesized correlation structure deviates too much from the observed correlation matrix. Based on the modification indices (MI) and expected parameter change (EPC), I propose two theoretically justifiable modifications to the original model to approach an adequate fit. First, I allow a residual correlation between the aspects 'no means-test' and 'extra earnings' (MI=43.6, EPC=.159). Both aspects particularly capture the economic aspect of unconditionality, intending to relax the income restrictions that are implemented in existing social assistance policies. It is thus unsurprising that these two aspects share variance additional to the full unconditional component. Second, I allow the 'no means-test' aspect to cross-load on the redistributive factor (MI=49.0, EPC=-.417). Substantively, means-testing has both an unconditional component – to prevent welfare abuse – and a redistributive component – to help the poor. The negative cross-loading also implies that support for

TABLE 2.3 Estimated factor loadings and correlations of the modified three-dimensional model of UBI support

			Three-dimensional	
		Universalism (a)	Redistribution (b)	Unconditionality (c)
Universal		1.137		
Sufficient			0.875	
Redistributive			0.505	
Individual				0.642
No means-test			-0.604	1.426
Extra earnings				0.605
No job-search requirement				0.785
Factor correlations	(a)		0.762	0.785
	(b)			0.828
	(c)			

a. X2(10) = 110.8; CFI = .966; TLI = .929; RSMEA = .092; SRMR = .039
b. factor loadings are estimated by constraining factor variance
c. residual covariance 'no means-test' and 'extra earnings': r=.118

means-testing and redistribution are positively related. Including these modifications strongly improves the fit of the three-dimensional model ($\Delta\chi2(2)=78.1$, $p<.001$) and brings the fit statistics near or beyond their accepted thresholds (see Table 2.2). The parameter estimates of the modified three-dimensional model are presented in Table 2.3. The estimates of all proposed measurement models are available in Appendix B2.

Note that I forego a further alteration that would improve model fit: excluding the 'redistributive' aspect. The redistributive aspect has a low correlation with the other items in every hypothesized factor structure – between r = .121 and r = .346 (see correlation matrix in Appendix C2). Likewise, the dimensional structure accounts for only around 15% of the variance in response to this item. While these statistics suggest that the redistributive aspect loads on a separate fourth dimension, the fit indices of such a structure do not point to an improved fit compared

to the three-dimensional model (see Table 2). However, while often neglected, the redistributive aspect is a contested but integral aspect of UBI policy (e.g. Chrisp & Martinelli 2019). For this reason, I opt to keep this aspect in the model while noting that redistribution seems to be a distinct and controversial issue which is only weakly associated with support for UBI policy.

Finally, it is vital to note that the three attitudinal dimensions are strongly correlated. Attitudes towards universalism correlate strongly with attitudes towards redistribution (r=.762) and unconditionality (r=.785). The correlation between attitudes towards redistribution and unconditionality is even higher (r=.828). Even though attitudes within each dimension correlate more strongly amongst than between dimensions – warranting the distinction of three dimensions – these attitudes cannot be considered independent. The dimensions of UBI support must be considered *related but distinct*. This provides some vindication for the assumed conceptual coherence of UBI policy. Attitudes may diverge somewhat between dimensions but can be considered indicative of 'generalized' UBI support.

Educational Differences in Dimensionality

To test the ambivalence hypothesis, I also assess whether the three dimensions of UBI support are less strongly correlated in lower educational strata. Contrary to my expectations, I find no evidence of greater attitudinal constraint amongst the higher educated.

First, the omnibus test of correlational differences suggests that the correlations differ between educational strata. The 'complete' model that constrains the six correlations to be equal across educational groups fits significantly worse than the 'metric' model with only constrained factor loadings[1] ($\Delta\chi^2[6]=23.0$, $p<.001$, $\Delta AIC=11$, $\Delta BIC = 20$). However, the individual correlations in Table 2.4 show that the correlational differences do not follow the expected pattern, i.e. the attitudinal constraint is not higher in higher educated strata. If any-

[1] The residual covariance parameter is also constrained between educational groups.

thing, the lower and middle educated are even more constrained in their attitudes than the higher-educated. The higher educated have more divergent attitudes towards redistribution and universalism (r=.694) compared to the middle (r=.806) and lower (r=.806) educated. Moreover, the middle educated are less likely to align their attitudes towards the universal and unconditional dimensions (r=.829) than the higher (r=.778) and lower (r=.735) educated. Likelihood ratio tests show a statistically significant difference in the correlations between universalism and redistribution ($\Delta\chi^2[2]=10.9$, $p<.01$) and universalism and unconditionality ($\Delta\chi^2[2]=12.2$, $p<.01$). The educational difference between correlations of redistribution and unconditionality is not significant, which is also inverse to my expectations. I thus find no clear evidence to suggest that education constrains attitudes towards UBI policy. Based on these results I propose that UBI policy is not very entrenched along political lines, but instead also divides educational elites, as suggested by e.g. Reed & Lansley (2016). Alternatively, it is possible that the higher educated are equally ambivalent towards any welfare state issue, since political parties position themselves increasingly along multiple lines of conflict (e.g. Pellikaan, de Lange & van der Meer 2007).

Constituencies and Demographics

Any dimensional distinction assumes, theoretically and conceptually, that the individual dimensions have different causes and consequences. I perform some post-hoc analyses to further strengthen the conceptual distinction between the three dimensions of UBI support. I assess whether key demographics differ in their support for each dimension, and to what extent policy dimensions influence voting behaviour. In both cases I use the unique variance associated with each dimension, i.e. controlled for the other dimensions. The descriptive statistics of the variables included in the post-hoc analyses are available in Appendix D2.

The socio-structural differences in support are presented in Table 2.5. I find marked differences between the dimensions of support for UBI, as well as attitudinal cross-pressures. First, while income groups

TABLE 2.4 Constrained factor loadings and unconstrained factor correlations per educational stratum

	Universal	Redistribution	Unconditional
Factor loadings			
Universal	1.140		
Redistributive		0.885	
Sufficient		0.502	
Individual			0.664
No means-test		-0.637	1.450
Extra earnings			0.604
Unconditional			0.780
Factor correlations			
Lower-educated			
Universal		0.806	0.735
Redistribution			0.832
Middle-educated			
Universal		0.806	0.829
Redistribution			0.867
Higher-educated			
Universal		0.694	0.778
Redistribution			0.796

Note: constrained residual covariance r=.108

do not differ significantly in their support for the universal aspect of UBI, higher-income households are less supportive of the redistributive aspect (b=-.171, p<.05) and marginally more supportive of the unconditional aspect (b=.151, p<.10). Simultaneously, the higher educated are marginally less supportive of the universal dimension (b=-.067, p<.10) and the redistribution dimension (b=-.073, p<.05) while being significantly more supportive of the unconditional dimension (b=.126, p<.01). These observations point to the confounding of economic self-

interest and cultural motives for policy support: as has been observed before, the lower classes tend to prefer more redistribution under strict behavioural conditions, while the higher classes have an economic interest in economically regressive policy while being more permissive of freeriding behaviour (Achterberg & Houtman 2009; Achterberg, Van der Veen & Raven 2014). Second, the self-employed are more in favour of the universal dimension (b=.184, p<.01), but also more opposed to the redistribution dimension than the wage workers (b=-.161, p<.01). Inversely, those dependent on welfare benefits are more supportive of the unconditional dimension compared to wage workers (b=.125, p<.05), but equally support the other two dimensions. These mechanics point to some distinct motives for supporting UBI policy: the self-employed seek the social support from which they are now largely excluded, while the unemployed tend to prefer freedom from the control mechanisms embedded in social policy. More generally, these results show that the dimensions of UBI support are uniquely motivated.

Table 2.6 shows that constituencies' support for UBI also differs between dimensions. First, the universal dimension appeals more strongly to the liberals, especially in comparison to the green left. This is remarkable given the typically leftist preference for UBI policy (e.g. Schwander & Vlandas 2020). Second, support for the redistributive dimension produces the strongest differences in voting behaviour. Those supporting the redistribution dimension are especially less likely to vote for the liberal and right-wing populist parties. Inversely, the redistributive component of UBI appeals to economically leftist voters, including those voting for conservative parties. Finally, while the redistributive dimension seems to unite conservative and leftist constituencies, the issue of unconditional welfare divides the liberal-conservative voter on the one hand and the progressive-left constituency on the other hand. Although the significance of these contrasts is not included in Table 2.6, a model with conservatives as a reference group confirms that those supporting unconditionality are significantly less likely to vote for conservative parties than social democrat (b=.660, p<.05), green left (b=.758, p<.05), labour (b=.572, p<.05) and even right-wing populist

TABLE 2.5 OLS regression estimates of background characteristics on dimensions of UBI support

		Universal		Redistribution		Unconditional	
Intercept		-0.071		0.185	*	-0.153	
Gender	Male						
	Female	0.009		-0.028		0.007	
Age		0.000		-0.001		0.001	
Migration background	Native						
	First gen.	-0.053		0.076		-0.044	
	Second gen.	0.003		0.054		-0.044	
Income	<14100						
	14100-36500	0.054		-0.045		0.012	
	36500-43500	0.039		-0.011		0.007	
	43500-73000	0.068		-0.048		0.011	
	>73000	0.057		-0.171	*	0.151	+
	No response	0.025		-0.034		0.013	
Education	Low						
	Middle	0.029		-0.073	*	0.033	
	High	-0.067	+	-0.030		0.126	**
Employment status	Employed						
	Student	0.017		-0.040		0.035	
	Self-employed	0.184	**	-0.161	**	0.028	
	Retired	0.046		-0.044		-0.044	
	Benefits	-0.069		-0.038		0.125	*
	Housework	0.146	+	-0.123	+	-0.001	
	Searching for job	0.032		-0.050		0.035	
	Other	-0.047		0.039		-0.025	
Controls	Universal			0.491	***	0.335	***
	Redistribution	0.678	***			0.519	***
	Unconditional	0.330	***	0.370	***		
R-square		0.761		0.784		0.711	

Note: ***p<.001, **p<.01, *p<.05, +p<.10

parties (b=.633, p<.05). Taken together, the liberal voter tends to support universal policy but rejects the redistributive component, while the conservative voter supports the redistributive component but re-

jects the unconditional component. The multidimensional approach presented here nicely disentangles these contradictions underlying support for UBI policy.

TABLE 2.6 Unique influence of support for UBI dimensions on voting behaviour

	Lib.	Conservat.	Soc. Dem.	Green left	Labour	Populist	Other
Intercept	ref.	-.320 **	-.055	-.210 +	.158	-.353 **	.367 ***
Universal	ref.	-.185	-.151	-.497 *	-.204	-.023	-.104
Redistribution	ref.	.877 **	.487 +	.988 ***	.648 *	.099	.364
Unconditional	ref.	-.359	.301	.399	.213	.273	.142

Note: we present log-odds from a multinomial logistic regression. Log-odds are relative to voting for liberal parties. The effects of each dimension are controlled for the other dimensions.
Note: ***p<.001, **p<.01, *p<.05, +p<.10

In sum, these post hoc comparisons show that the three dimensions each have distinct causes and consequences. Universalism is a more liberal issue supported especially by entrepreneurs. Redistribution is an economic issue that unites conservative and leftist voters against liberal and populist constituencies. Inversely, unconditionality is a moral issue that divides the lower-educated liberal-conservative voters on the one hand and the higher-educated progressive left on the other.

5 • CONCLUSION: AMBIGUOUS BUT COHERENT

UBI policy has rapidly become a much-discussed alternative to targeted activation policies (e.g. OECD 2017). The public legitimacy of UBI policy remains one of the key outstanding questions, both as an obstacle and as an opportunity for its political implementation (De Wispeleare & Noguera 2012). In this chapter, I developed a multidimensional perspective on UBI support, in an attempt to understand which controversies underly public support for such policy. My analysis suggests that support for UBI policy is driven by three related but distinct welfare controversies, regarding universalism, redistribution and unconditionality. These controversies seem to persist amongst societal elites, given the lack of evidence for educational differences in

ambivalence towards UBI. Post-hoc comparisons further indicate cross-pressures underlying UBI support. Compared to the higher educated, the lower educated – as well as conservative voters – tend to be more supportive of redistributive aspects while rejecting the unconditionality of UBI (e.g. Achterberg & Houtman 2009). Moreover, liberals and the self-employed are relatively supportive of universal benefits while opposing redistribution, which makes sense considering their support for other universal arrangements such as childcare policies (e.g. Gingrich & Haussermann 2015). Combining these dimensions into a single policy thus both yields broad appeal as well as internal conflict.

The finding of related but distinct attitudinal dimensions has three implications for the study of UBI support. First, the presence of distinct attitudinal dimensions shows that there are some competing considerations underlying support for the UBI proposal. While studies that rely on a single-item indicator of UBI support emphasize the importance of redistribution as a motive for support (e.g. Roosma & Van Oorschot 2020; Parolin & Siöland 2020; Vlandas 2021; Schwander & Vlandas 2020), this study shows that key demographics and constituencies support and oppose different aspects of the policy. Second, the complexity of UBI support is limited, pointing to the value of a simpler approach to multidimensionality. While extant work on the multidimensionality of UBI treats the level of the benefit and funding mechanisms as separate dimensions of support (e.g. Chrisp, Pulkka & Rincón 2020; Stadelman-Steffen & Dermont 2020), this study suggests that these aspects are part of a single redistributive controversy. Similarly, the attitudes towards various conditional aspects (e.g. Rincón 2021a; Laenen, Van Hootegem & Rossetti 2022) seem driven by the same welfare controversy. Third, despite these distinct controversies underlying UBI support, the strong correlation between attitudinal dimensions shows that UBI policy is a reasonably coherent policy in the public mind. Using survey experiments to investigate how policy designs alter policy support – the predominant multidimensional approach – has obscured the strong commonalities in support between dimensions. Thus, the one-dimensional approach to measuring UBI is vindicated to an important extent.

Surprisingly, the lack of educational differences in ambivalence towards UBI suggests that these three welfare controversies persist amongst societal elites. This casts doubt on the relevance of ambivalence theory (Feldman & Zeller 1992; see also Converse 1964) on UBI attitudes. If this finding generalizes to other policy areas, this may point to a broader development, wherein educational strata generally become increasingly similar in distinguishing economic and cultural welfare controversies, possibly because political parties position themselves increasingly along multiple lines of conflict (e.g. Pellikaan, de Lange & van der Meer 2007). It is also possible that the lack of educational differences in ambivalence is particular to UBI policy. UBI is still very much contested in politics along multiple lines and as a policy proposal it is conceptually flexible (De Wispelaere 2016; de Wispeleare & Stirton 2004). If this confusion amongst political elites diffuses, as predicted by the theory of ambivalence, it produces divergent attitudes amongst educational elites. Moreover, the lack of constraint may be partly due to 'bottom-up' processes in the UBI discourse. UBI is typically not strongly endorsed by mainstream political parties, but instead found its way back into the mainstream through advocacy from policy entrepreneurs and activists (Caputo & Liu 2020). This agenda-setting dynamic undermines the logic of ambivalence, since the idea now reaches elites via the media and activist publics rather than the other way around. Both pathways would explain why educational elites hold equally ambivalent opinions towards UBI as the lower educated.

While I leveraged a unique dataset that included measures on multiple aspects of UBI policy, the reader should bear in mind that the sample is restricted to the Dutch population: the attitudinal structure of UBI support may differ between countries. Some studies already point to differences in support between countries (Stadelmann-Steffen & Dermont 2020; Parolin & Siöland 2020), and Dutch politics seems particularly receptive to UBI-style reforms (e.g. Groot, Muffels & Verlaat 2019). Moreover, the measurement is limited to a particular 'liberal-egalitarian' operationalization of UBI policy, despite the known diversity in UBI proposals (e.g. De Wispelaere & Stirton 2004, Rincón 2021). Even within a single policy design, while the choice

for aspects of UBI is theoretically grounded, it cannot do full justice to the complexity of the UBI discussion. Particular justifications for UBI, such as its liberation from work and economic necessity (Van Parijs 1991; Offe & Van Parijs 2013), are not included as policy aspects. Likewise, I omitted the explicit benefit eligibility of immigrants as a policy aspect. Reducing bureaucracy is also a popular argument for UBI policy (e.g. De Wispelaere & Stirton 2013) and welfare policy more generally (e.g. Roosma, Gelissen & Van Oorschot 2013). Elements of reducing bureaucracy are only implicitly included as part of removing means-testing and allowing extra earnings. Finally, while I find strong correlations in support between aspects of UBI, these may be somewhat overestimated due to scale effects: people are prone to be consistent in their attitudes when repeatedly questioned on a similar topic.

Notwithstanding these limitations, the differences in support between social categories point to the opportunities and challenges for designing a comprehensive UBI proposal with broad public support. Some constituencies prefer conditional redistributive policies, while others prefer universal or unconditional policies funded through regressive taxation. Interestingly, I find that unconditionality is the least politically polarising dimension of UBI. While the idea of unconditional welfare for everyone finds similar levels of support amongst all constituencies, the redistributive question divides the liberals and leftists, and the principle of welfare for everyone is particularly offensive to the Green constituency. Thus, for a broad range of demographics and constituencies, there is both something to like and something to dislike about UBI policy, leaving room for both compromise (e.g. Reed & Lansley 2016) and division (e.g. De Wispelaere 2016). From the perspective of popular legitimacy, the opportunities to move beyond pilot studies and implement UBI on a larger scale are shaped by the compromises that constituencies and their representatives are willing to accept.

Finally, even when the opportunities to implement UBI remain limited, the UBI debate provides guidelines to improve the system of social security following popular demand. Compared to earlier accounts,

my findings suggest that positive social investment principles such as allowing extra earnings are supported by the Dutch public (Hemerijck 2017), while strict activation principles such as the job search requirements (Gilbert 2002) seem to become increasingly controversial (see also Roosma 2022). Moreover, the coherence of popular support suggests that targets, taxes and conditions may indeed be perceived as part of the same parcel. The presentation in the public debate may play a key role in the construction of this perception, a point to which I will turn in the following chapter.

3 More than a Free Lunch

A Content Analysis of Universal Basic Income Controversies on Dutch Twitter

ABSTRACT

Universal Basic Income (UBI) reached political agendas as a proposal to radically reform welfare systems, followed by scholarly interest in its public legitimacy. While surveys find UBI support to be mostly redistribution-driven, the discussion in science and media suggests a more nuanced understanding. In the Netherlands, the UBI proposal went viral on Twitter before (again) reaching newspapers and policymakers, suggesting that something happened on the platform that led to its political legitimation. In this chapter I identify the arguments adopted in the UBI debate on Dutch Twitter though content analysis, to show how journalists, elites and online audiences legitimate the proposal. In addition to identifying arguments on established welfare controversies such as redistribution and welfare conditionality, my analysis shows that the debate is marked by critiques of welfare bureaucracies and targeted activation policies, and the 'post-productivist' narrative on the automation of labour. Overall, the case for UBI reforms is more than the promise of a 'free lunch': it is anchored in fundamental critiques of economic and welfare institutions.

This chapter is a slightly adapted version of a publication in the Journal of Social Policy & Society: Gielens, E., Roosma, F., & Achterberg, P. (2022). More than a Free Lunch: A content analysis of the controversies surrounding Universal Basic Income on Dutch Twitter. Social Policy and Society, 1-21. https://doi.org/10.1017/S1474746422000422

1 • INTRODUCTION

Attention for universal basic income (UBI) policy has peaked in recent years: the radical idea of universal and unconditional social policy reached media and political agendas in countries like Finland (De Wispelaere et al., 2018), the Netherlands (Groot, Muffels & Verlaat, 2019) and Canada (Forget et al., 2016). This renewed interest has not eluded academic proponents, who have argued that basic income has become a legitimate policy alternative (Reed & Lansley, 2016).

In response to this popularity, scholars of welfare legitimacy seek to explain why such a policy attracts popular support. Representative survey studies have shown that popular support for UBI is most strongly motivated by redistributive interests and the principled reduction of inequalities (e.g. Delsen & Schilpzand, 2019; Roosma & Van Oorschot, 2020), lending credence to the idea that UBI is mainly perceived as a 'free lunch' (Friedman, 1975). Chrisp et al. (2020) and Rincón (2021) find that taxation mechanisms have the strongest impact on support for UBI. Vlandas (2021) similarly argues that the political left, including labour unions, plays a pivotal role in coalition formation surrounding UBI. Schwander and Vlandas (2020) find that leftist support for UBI is grounded primarily in a 'labourist' ideology, suggesting that concerns about the exploitation of the working classes drive UBI support. This is contrasted with support amongst politicians, where especially the green parties and activist movements endorse UBI (Liu, 2020; Perkiö, 2020). Other studies focus on anti-immigrant sentiments as the main obstacle to UBI support (Bay & Pedersen, 2006; Stadelmann-Steffen & Dermont, 2020). Parolin and Siöland (2019) also point to the importance of welfare chauvinism as an objection to UBI. Rosetti and colleagues (2020) find that objections to UBI are grounded more generally in the (un)deservingness of the unemployed. Overall, existing survey studies have been fairly successful in explaining UBI support using established theories of welfare politics.

However, existing opinion studies rely almost exclusively on survey data, a method with drawbacks. In the best case, constructing survey items based only on expert knowledge risks overlooking important

aspects of UBI discussions (e.g. Laenen, Rosetti & Van Oorschot, 2019). In the worst case, empirically ungrounded surveys risk capturing framing effects, 'creating' preferences rather than measuring pre-existing ones. These concerns are especially relevant in the case of UBI because the proposal is flexibly defined (Chrisp & Martinelli, 2019), and arguments used to justify its implementation evolve (e.g. Perkiö, 2020). Moreover, particularly in the case of UBI, the general public is often underinformed, further fuelling fears of unreliable support measures (Rossetti et al., 2020, see also Roosma & Van Oorschot, 2020; Dermont & Weisstanner, 2020).

Two related kinds of literature already suggest that the UBI debate adopts arguments not included in current survey studies on UBI support. First, the social justice literature provides a range of arguments for why unconditional and universal welfare is justified. UBI is defended as an emancipatory policy that provides "real freedom" and autonomy (Van Parijs, 1991; Birnbaum, 2012), to extend the notion of work beyond productive employment (Offe & Van Parijs 2013), towards a broader concept of work that includes valuing unpaid labour such as childcare and volunteering (Jordan, 2012). Second, qualitative framing studies show how the policy is portrayed in media and politics. These studies generally indicate a much broader discussion in politics and media than suggested by survey research. For example, Perkiö (2020) shows that Finnish politics is most concerned with the activating potential of UBI, while newspapers across various countries predominantly frame UBI in the context of automated labour and reducing the need for full-time employment (Perkiö, Rincón & Van Draanen, 2019).

In this chapter I aim to confirm, correct, and broaden the scope of survey studies on UBI support through a content analysis of peak discussions on Dutch Twitter. Twitter has been heralded for providing researchers with relatively open access to a unique source of data: a platform that hosts public debate on policy issues without formal restrictions (Mutz, 2006; Mejova, Weber & Macy 2015). The medium has been leveraged to study online political phenomena such as political campaigns (Conway-Silva et al., 2018), political polarization

(Barberá et al., 2015), and social movements (Ince, Rojas & Davis 2017). The platform is also particularly relevant to study the debate surrounding UBI policy in the Netherlands: Dutch Twitter uniquely hosted multiple viral discussions of UBI in the period 2014-2016. The online attention led political elites to engage with UBI – especially on the municipal level – and facilitated the setup of experiments with unconditional social assistance (for an extensive discussion see Groot, Muffels & Verlaat, 2019). Moreover, the range of arguments discussed on Twitter is likely to be broad. Even though the Twitter discussion is often triggered and structured by political elites and mainstream media coverage (e.g. Russel Neuman et al. 2014), the Twitter audience is free to engage within these boundaries, leaving space for arguments outside the established welfare policy discourse. The analysis of arguments used on Twitter should therefore complement existing studies on framing and popular support for UBI policy. In line with the second research question of this dissertation, I ask:

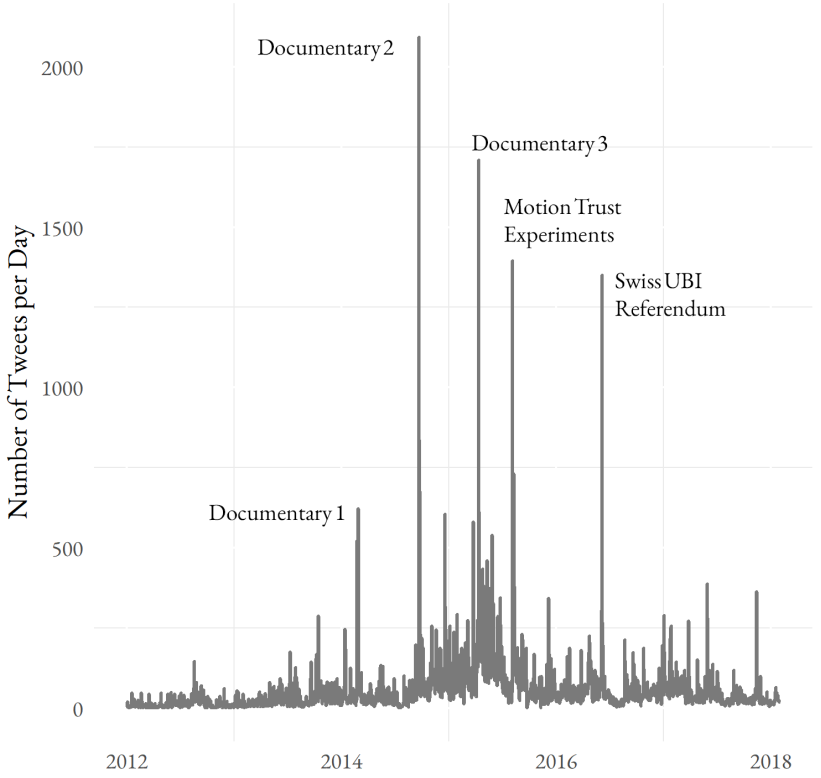
Which arguments are used to endorse and oppose the UBI proposal on Dutch Twitter?

In the remainder of this article, I first elaborate on the context of the UBI debate in the Netherlands and the methodological procedures. Next, I discuss the identified controversies in detail, particularly compared to existing studies on welfare legitimacy and UBI. Finally, I present my conclusion, the discussion of limitations, and my recommendations for future studies.

2 • UBI DEBATE IN THE NETHERLANDS

Compared to most other countries, the Netherlands has witnessed a relatively active and consequential revival of the UBI discussion. First, the debate followed an earlier peak of interest in the 1980s (Groot & Van der Veen, 2000). The idea was featured in a report by the Dutch scientific council WRR (1985), a public think tank advising on government policy. Mainstream political parties have however never been strong proponents of UBI policy. Labour parties and Christian democrats

FIGURE 3.1 Daily volume of tweets and replies mentioning Universal Basic Income



rejected these proposals for being too low for those who need them and superfluous for those that do not. Particularly the labour party (PvdA) preferred work-based social security mediated by labour union negotiations. The Green Left and liberal democrats (D66) have shown sympathy towards UBI proposals, but never consistently argued for them.

In the most recent wave, renewed interest in UBI was initially driven by 'fringe' journalism, amplified by Twitter audiences, as also suggested by the order of events in Figure 3.1. Publicist Rutger Bregman (2013; 2014) initially published an article and a book on the online journalist

platform 'the Correspondent' with UBI as a flagship proposal. Based on Bregman's work, the future affairs program Tegenlicht (2014; 2015) aired several documentaries on Dutch national broadcast television. This drew public attention to the idea, especially on Twitter, where the two subsequent episodes became trending topics. All three episodes use the threat of automated labour to argue for the necessity of UBI policy. If unaddressed, the automation of labour would increase economic inequalities and create an insecurely employed underclass. A second tenet criticizes the existing welfare state as inefficient and unable to protect citizens from poverty or guide them towards employment. The most notable reasons mentioned to implement UBI policy are (a) providing income security in the face of automation, (b) allowing the working poor to invest in education, childcare, and basic goods, and (c) increasing happiness, social trust, and reducing poverty stress. Summaries of the documentaries are provided in Appendix A3.

After the third episode aired, local politics caught up with the hype. In response to the attention for UBI and the lobby for experimenting with such a policy, a dozen of Dutch municipalities started experiments with unconditional social assistance. It seems the public enthusiasm for UBI came at the right time: the decentralization of social assistance benefits from the national to the municipal level came with financial struggles, and some municipal councils doubted the effectiveness of activating incentives (Groot, Muffels & Verlaat, 2019). While these experiments were "inspired" by the UBI discussion (p. 280), they were framed as 'trust experiments' to avoid the political controversy surrounding UBI policy. The trust experiments investigated whether removing 'stick-and-carrot' incentives attached to social assistance benefits would improve the well-being of social assistance beneficiaries and their chance of finding a job. Activation incentives were thought to generate additional stress (e.g. Mani et al. 2013) and distrust towards welfare institutions (Bohnet, Frey & Huck 2001), consequently impeding the ability of welfare recipients to find a job. Inversely, trust in welfare recipients would foster cooperative attitudes and enable them to find a job faster. Uncoincidentally, as I show below, these arguments were also put forward in the Twitter debate.

3 • DATA AND METHODS

Content Analysis

This article employs content analysis (see Krippendorff, 2018) of tweets to identify and classify emergent arguments used in favour and against UBI policy in public debate. I take an inductive or emergent approach to content analysis (e.g. Mayring, 2004). In this section, I elaborate on the procedures underlying the development of the coding scheme: the data and sample selection, coding strategy, and validation procedure.

We employ a qualitative content analysis rather than a computational text analysis approach. Computational approaches either cluster words into topics based on their co-occurrence across documents (for an introduction see Blei & Lafferty 2009) or train an automated classifier based on labelled input data (for an overview see Kowasari et al. 2019). While the unmistakable advantage of these tools lies in their ability to deal with enormous datasets, qualitative content analysis still outperforms such computational approaches in two ways. First, content analysis yields a more comprehensive and fine-grained set of arguments compared to text clustering approaches. Topic models are well suited to identify broad categories such as 'politics', 'economy' or 'entertainment', but are less able to distinguish distinct arguments within a single topic, especially in relation to the broader socio-cultural context (Zamith & Lewis 2015:312; Krippendorff 2018:210). A human coder, instead, *interprets* tweets to derive the arguments they contain, and therefore achieves more reliable and more nuanced results, albeit on a much smaller scale. Second, text classification requires large volumes of labelled training data – often based on content analysis – to produce accurate results (e.g. van Smeden et al. 2019). Labelling the required amount of training data for policy debates quickly becomes unfeasible because the range of arguments is broad (eventually I identified 55 unique arguments) and some arguments are much more frequent than others. Moreover, automated classification would add only argument frequencies without identifying new arguments, which is not the main focus of this chapter. When the arguments are many

and language is varied and nuanced – as is often the case – qualitative content analysis produces an equally valid range of arguments.

Regardless, a content analysis of tweets comes with its limitations. Twitter datasets often contain spam and unrelated tweets, and debates on Twitter are often difficult to capture completely because of search restrictions and participants deleting their tweets and accounts over time (Krapf 2012; Ruis-Soler 2017). Moreover, when aiming to study representative public opinion, it must be noted that Twitter users are not representative of the general population (e.g. Barberá & Rivero 2015). The political left is somewhat overrepresented on Dutch Twitter (Wieringa et al. 2018) and those engaging in political debates are more likely to be male and higher educated (van Klingeren, Trilling & Möller 2021). In addition, content analysis can only include a limited number of tweets due to the time-intensive analytical process. In light of these restrictions, I aim to identify a large and comprehensive variety of arguments. Argument frequencies are not representative of the societal debate and must be interpreted with care. Moreover, qualitative analysis generally relies on the interpretation of researchers, to ascertain that arguments are used. While misinterpretation cannot be prevented entirely, it is minimized through establishing intercoder reliability and a transparent report of coding processes and results.

Data and Sample Selection

Tweets are gathered first by searching for 'basic income' ('basisinkomen') in the Twitter search engine[1]. The Dutch term is exclusively used to refer to UBI, also including variations such as 'universal basic income'. I used the Twitter API to identify replies to the tweets found by the search engine. To capture full conversations, I include up until the ninth reply to tweets mentioning UBI. I decided to stop here because the number of ninth-reply tweets is already negligible (1.1 per cent of tweets) and the discussion tends to become redundant or off-topic.

[1] https://twitter.com/search-home

I purposively select all tweets posted on three essential days: the airing of the second documentary (2014-09-21), the third documentary (2015-04-12), and the day of the announcement of the trust experiments (2015-08-05), amounting to a total of 5687 tweets. Although a random sampling strategy is common in the content analytic approach, there are several reasons to opt for a purposive sample supplemented by a random sample. First, the key events on the purposefully selected days attracted the most attention from the Twitter audience, illustrating their importance for the broader discussion. To take a purely random sample of days would be to ignore the event-centred nature of (social) media, where some days are simply more important for some topics than others. Second, with this sampling strategy, I seek to maximize the variation in employed arguments. Particularly opponent arguments are more equally represented on high-attention days. Third, social media audiences actively engage with arguments presented in traditional media. The purposive sample thus reflects an active public response to the most influential (but selective) media events surrounding UBI policy in the Netherlands.

While guided by these events the arguments here go beyond a mere rehashing of the documentaries. First, a supplementary analysis based on a random sample of 10 days reveals no alternative arguments left uncaptured by the purposive sample (see Appendix B3). Second, Appendix B3 also shows that roughly the same arguments are used on different random days, pointing to their broader relevance to the Twitter debate. Third, there are tweeted arguments (especially counterarguments) that remain unaddressed in the documentaries that inspired the debate (see Appendix A3). These reflections suggest that the analysis includes a comprehensive (but probably not exhaustive) set of arguments employed on Twitter.

The purposive sample also excludes some peak events, most notably the first documentary and the response to the downvoted Swiss referendum. This exclusion is first based on the practical limitation of qualitatively analysing many tweets. After reaching a point of saturation most arguments are included, as also demonstrated by the supplementary random sample in Appendix B3. Moreover, the second documentary

seems to have been the starting point of a period of heightened attention on Twitter, perhaps because of its more pragmatic emphasis on the implementation and comparison to existing welfare arrangements (see Appendix A3 for a summary and comparison of the episodes). The sheer number of responses makes the second documentary more relevant to analyse. Finally, the response to the Swiss referendum is also excluded, for its limited relevance to the Dutch debate. Excluding this event is thus also a matter of methodological purity.

Coding Strategy

We take an inductive approach to coding, where the aim is not to be led by existing theory, but rather to "stay as close to the material as possible" (Mayring, 2004: 2). The development of a coding scheme is an iterative procedure where initial categories are evaluated, combined, or split as more data is added (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010). The coding process roughly moves from open coding – where categories are discovered – to axial coding – the merging and splitting of categories according to their similarities and distinctions – and selective coding – the application of a crystallized coding scheme (Corbin & Strauss, 1990, see also Cho & Lee, 2014).

Up to three categories are coded per tweet. When no category could be discerned, tweets are assigned to a miscellaneous category (e.g. unclear, spam, unrelated, emotional expression).[2] Tweet content is often difficult to understand in isolation, especially when it is part of a larger conversation. When the argument in a tweet is unclear, the coder first reads the conversational thread in which tweets are embedded and then the other tweets of that (anonymized) author. Tweets containing links to newspaper articles or blogs are coded based on the main argument(s) in the article title or abstract. The minority of tweets linking to video

[2] 34.1 per cent of tweets fall into one of these miscellaneous categories. This shows that 'shitposting', casual conversation and emotional expression are common on Twitter. The 65.9 per cent of relevant tweets, however, show that the platform can occasionally function as a deliberative space (see Rogers 2014)

and audio material are not coded substantively. In the case of quoted tweets, I code only the comment of the author.

We assessed the reliability of the final coding scheme using intercoder reliability. The sample was constructed using a stratified random sample: for each category (including the miscellaneous category) I randomly selected 9 tweets, amounting to a total of 414 tweets (7.3 per cent of the full sample). Two coders agreed on 96.7 per cent of labels. Correcting for agreement by chance yields an average reliability of κ=.430 across categories. Although guidelines vary, this reliability can be considered 'fair to good' (Fleiss, 1981:218). While intercoder reliability estimates of content analyses on Twitter are usually somewhat higher – if reported at all – a less than exceptional reliability is expected and accepted due to the unusually extensive coding scheme (55 categories) and a relatively ambiguous type of content: substantive arguments rather than speech acts or broad topics.

4 • RESULTS

Careful analysis of the data shows that the UBI discussion follows four central controversies: economic redistribution, welfare conditionality, welfare state efficiency, and structural unemployment. Within these controversies, debates reflect policy principles (Jaeger 2006), welfare critiques (Roosma, Van Oorschot & Gelissen, 2016), and recipient deservingness (Van Oorschot et al. 2017). I elaborate on each of these lines of debate in the following section.

Most fundamentally, participants try to frame UBI as either redistributive, efficient, or liberating. Opponents stress the redistributive aspect of UBI, aiming to frame the policy either as a tax burden or as a form of welfare retrenchment. Some proponents, on the other hand, actively reject the redistributive frame and instead emphasize the importance of unconditionality. Others still focus on fixing the shortcomings of the existing welfare system. I thus recognize different dimensions of controversy, pointing to the relevance of frames for the legitimacy of UBI (e.g. Bay & Petersen, 2006; Perkiö, 2020, see also Chong & Druckman, 2007). I also recognize the discursive tension

between liberal and egalitarian versions of the UBI proposal (e.g. De Wispeleare, 2016; Chrisp & Martinelli, 2019), which seems especially emphasized by opponents.

Figure 3.2 shows the occurrence frequency of each controversy. Arguments regarding economic redistribution are most frequently adopted, followed by welfare conditionality, welfare state efficiency, and structural unemployment. Especially discussion surrounding the affordability of UBI contributes to the topical dominance of the redistributive fault line. All the arguments within each fault line, each including a brief description, can be found in Appendix C3. The relative frequency of each argument can be found in Appendix A3.

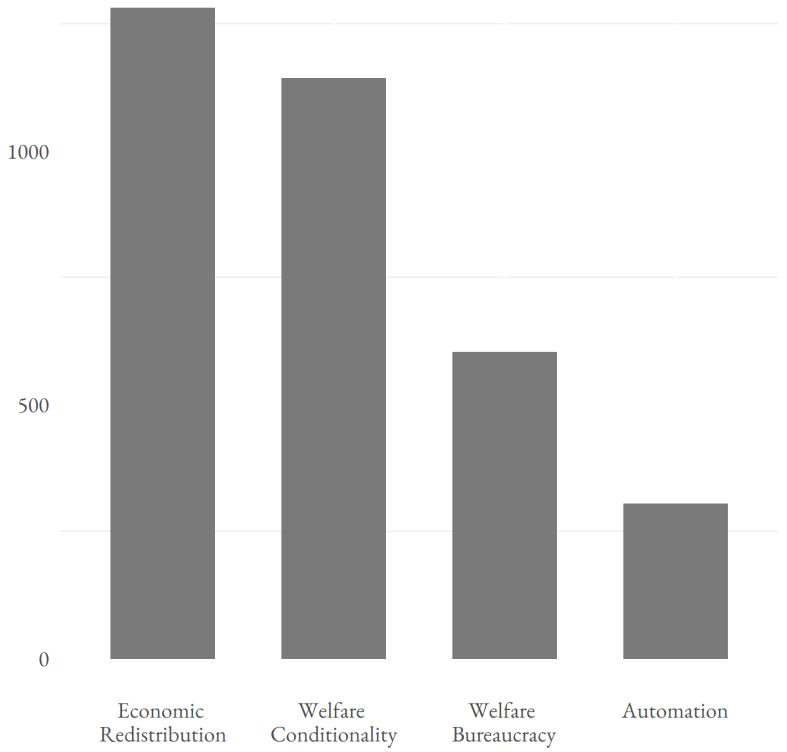
Economic Redistribution

Redistributive justice is a key aspect of welfare politics, and this is also the case with UBI. What constitutes a fair distribution of the tax burden is captured in two opposing ideologies: egalitarian and liberal (e.g. Jaeger, 2006). Framing of UBI as a redistributive policy occurs both by proponents (who defend the social right to income) and opponents (who want to 'expose' UBI as a redistributive policy or, inversely, as welfare state retrenchment). In the debate, the principle of providing minimum income assistance is barely contested. Instead, this discussion revolves mainly around the level of income assistance and the question of taxation.

Most basically, participants present UBI as "a human right"[1] referring at least in part to Marshall's (1950:149) concept of social rights. A basic tenet of UBI is indeed to be a "minimum living wage"[2], "effective against poverty"[3]. Some arguments take this idea a step further into the domain of economic equality, by presenting UBI as the "solution to income inequality"[4], or the "answer to the excesses of capitalism"[5]. Granting the benefit to everyone would "prevent stigmatization"[6] of the unemployed, in contrast to socially divisive targeted benefits (see also Larsen, 2008).

On the opposing side, there is first the 'labourist' opposition (e.g. Navarro, 2018; see also Schwander & Vlandas, 2020), contending that

FIGURE 3.2 Adoption frequency of arguments per controversy



UBI will retrench welfare and increase poverty. In one apt summary, UBI is described as "anti-social or unaffordable"[7]. On the one hand, UBI would not be able to sufficiently support those unable to work, so "those who cannot do something on the side face a position of poverty"[8]. On the other hand, an untargeted policy such as UBI is regressive and thus would unfairly benefit the rich: "why should those that can take care of themselves receive it? Let the people that can't get it"[9]. In combination with suspicion towards liberal proponents ("it

is a liberal invention"[10]), the socialist opposition concludes that UBI "leads to the demolition of social security"[11].

On the other side of the opponent spectrum, I also find the liberal opposition, warning that UBI will lead to higher income tax and extensive redistribution of wealth and income: "it is a complete illusion to think that UBI represents the end of 'justice-driven redistribution'"[12]. More concretely, this is expressed in questions of affordability ("Who will pay for it?"[13]), or in explicit references to income tax – "'free money' has to be stolen (taxed) from someone"[14] or UBI is "nothing but redistribution"[15], and ironically a quote from UBI proponent Friedman (1975) himself: "there is no such thing as a free lunch"[16]. More extreme statements compare UBI to "disguised Marxism"[17] that "smells like Lenin and his comrades"[18], referring both to the redistributive and utopian aspects of UBI.

In contrast, some participants actively contest the redistributive frame. UBI is "not redistributing between rich and poor"[19]; "people who earn money do not gain or lose anything"[20]. Questions of 'who is going to pay' are often resolved by referring to the costs saved by reforming the existing welfare bureaucracy[21] and reduced health costs due to increased well-being[22]. From this point of view, redistributive issues are subordinate to the unconditional provision of income.

In sum, there is much disagreement regarding the redistributive character of UBI. Some argue it is redistributive, others as regressive, and others still dismiss the redistributive frame entirely. This controversy highlights the relevance of the redistributive ideology in the case of UBI. Moreover, some opponents invoke the (un)deservingness of the rich and needy to oppose the universal aspect of UBI.

Welfare Conditionality

The second line of discussion surrounds the work obligation or the degree to which the provision of social rights should be contingent on labour market participation. The two opposing positions on this axis are those arguing for freedom versus those arguing for responsibility.

From the freedom perspective, unconditional income such as UBI

serves primarily to release the work obligation (see e.g. Vallentyne, 2000). This perspective views capitalism as "a repressive system that forces individuals to commodify themselves on the labour market" (Schwander & Vlandas, 2020:4). The left-libertarian critique deems the work obligation unethical, and the government apparatus that enforces the work obligation repressive. Releasing this obligation amounts to "real freedom" (Van Parijs, 1991; see also Birnbaum, 2012:32), greater individual wellbeing, and social participation.

From this point of view, freeing people from the obligation to work is a matter of social justice (see also Dahrendorf, 1988:148). UBI is conceptualized as "liberating [and] emancipating"[23], providing "freedom of choice"[24], and representing "the end of wage slavery"[25]. The explicit radical idea of "money without [work] requirement"[26] – or the more provocative "free money"[27] – is deemed a "human right"[28]. The freedom perspective rejects the work obligation and instead argues that UBI constitutes the ultimate form of individual freedom. The concept of justice as freedom goes beyond the traditional principle of economic equality (Marshall, 1950) because it explicitly requires unconditional benefits in addition to universal access to welfare.

The freedom gained by UBI serves to improve individual well-being and self-actualization. Society is thought to ask too much from its workers ("why do we work ourselves to death?"[29]), resulting in "idiotic work pressure"[30] and "antidepressants and sleeping pills"[31] to cope with it. Contrarily, a society that implements UBI is "much less stressful"[32] because "the fear to lose [your] job disappears"[33]. Consequently, with a basic income "people become happier and healthier"[34], preventing "psychological conditions"[35] and encouraging "self-development"[36].

The freedom perspective is also critical towards the performance of targeted activation policies. First, activation policies are deemed "inhumane"[37] and "restrictive"[38] "bully-policies"[39], that "force people to enter humiliating trajectories to look for non-existing jobs"[40]. This coincides with studies finding that cultural individualists oppose commodifying welfare reforms (Achterberg, Van der Veen & Raven, 2014). Second, targeted welfare policy is considered stigmatizing and

socially divisive (see e.g. Larsen 2008). Instead, a UBI would "make a big commune of the Netherlands"[41], restoring "social capital"[42] and "repairing the connection between individuals and society"[43]. This position thus directly opposes the 'enabling' or 'workfare' approach to welfare, claiming that the employment incentives embedded in welfare policy result in social exclusion and isolation rather than social inclusion and participation (see also Calnitsky, 2016).

In defence of welfare conditionality, the work obligation is seen as a responsibility to society (White, 2006). Individuals are deemed responsible to provide for themselves as best they can, and social support – rather than a social right – is only justified in cases of need. The "principle of individual responsibility"[44] forms a moral objection against UBI. People should "generate income by working"[45] because "we aren't toddlers that need care from mommy and daddy"[46]. This principle is given further credence by invoking deservingness objections ("everyone a [UBI] and no-one who deserves it"[47], "a [UBI] for paupers, jerries and sloths"[48], it only attracts "workshy scum"[49] etcetera). Such expressions accord with much prior work that highlights the importance of moral objections to unconditional welfare (e.g. Groot & Van der Veen, 2000; Sloman, 2018) and its relation with perceived recipient deservingness (Van Oorschot et al., 2017).

The reciprocity objection also elicits concerns about the consequences of UBI. Some view it as a "perverse incentive"[50] which "lowers the incentive to work"[51]: with a UBI, people will "go to Thailand"[52]. Others apply the framework of 'welfare chauvinism' (De Koster, Achterberg & Van der Waal, 2013) and 'welfare magnetism' (Bommes & Geddes, 2000). Basic income is supposed to "attract even more immigrants"[53], "bringing the whole world to here"[54], and creating "a huge attraction [of immigrants] from within the EU"[55]. These findings confirm the continued relevance of welfare chauvinism for the legitimacy of UBI (Bay & Pedersen, 2006; Stadelman-Steffen & Dermont, 2020; Parolin & Siöland, 2020).

In sum, the work obligation is the second main controversy concerning support for UBI policy. For some, this obligation is repressive, while others consider it a social or individual responsibility. In

addition to these principles, the consequences of releasing the work obligation are hotly debated. Each side of the spectrum has its activation logic, with some contending that work incentives crowd out intrinsic motivations and others that extrinsic incentives are needed to prevent widespread idleness. Opponents in particular object to UBI by invoking the (un)deservingness of the unemployed, the needy, and immigrants.

Welfare Bureaucracy

Concerns over the efficiency and effectiveness of welfare state policy generate two opposing positions, regarding trust and incentives, both in favour of UBI. Both aim to remove work disincentives from existing policies and reduce costly activation policies, to increase labour market participation. They are opposed, however, in their approach. From a trust position, removing 'stick-and-carrot' incentives will build the cooperative attitude needed to find a job. The incentive position, in contrast, argues that work participation increases when a below-subsistence-level benefit is offered.

The inefficiencies of the existing welfare system are universally recognized. The idea that inefficient and ineffective policies undermine welfare legitimacy is well-known in the literature (Roosma, Van Oorschot & Gelissen, 2016). The current system of tax supplements and deductions is referred to as a "deduction circus"[56] and "circulation machine"[57], "administrative hell"[58], and "benefit Moloch"[59]. Recurrently, the government bureaucracy is referred to as "work provision"[60] for public officials, stating that "it is a societal choice to keep people employed like this"[61]. In essence, the problem is that "the current system of social provisions is inefficient"[62] because it is considered to create "useless, empty costs"[63] with large investments in "senseless courses and reintegration programs"[64], while its complexity makes it "sensitive to fraud"[65]. The main selling point of basic income from an efficiency point of view is to simplify the social security system. One of the main public advocates of this position speaks of "an alternative to the circulation machine"[66]. The focus is to "replace all benefits with a

basic income"[67], so that "with basic income unemployment benefits, social assistance and retirement funds cease to exist"[68] and "deductibles and supplements will be abolished" amounting to "just a simpler system of taxation"[69]. In contrast to the other arguments, the efficiency argument heavily accentuates cost-effectiveness.

In contrast to prior lines of discussion, the trust and incentive positions also agree on the idea that UBI should reduce welfare dependency by motivating claimants to accept paid employment: UBI "stimulates employment"[70], "catalyses activity"[71] and "increases economic activity and earning potential"[72]. Work disincentives in the welfare system are also a shared concern. UBI would remove "paralyzing"[73] work disincentives, mainly referring to the poverty trap. "Social assistance benefits do not motivate people to work"[74], because of "the fear to lose their benefit"[75]. "Earning extra next to the benefit is punished [with] a reduction [of the benefit]"[76]. With UBI "the impulse to work is greater because your benefit is not reduced"[77]. Thus, the restrictive rules surrounding (part-time) work form an obstacle that prevents people from re-entering the labour market.

Despite all this consensus, there is a fundamental difference in the perceived proper method to activate the unemployed. First, from the perspective of trust, removing work incentives is supposed to provide mental space and improve government-client relations, which in turn motivates the unemployed to seek paid employment. With UBI "people work because they are motivated rather for survival"[78]. One participant notes that "when you can choose how to live your life, you will achieve more and feel valued"[79]. Without employment incentives, "people will work out of ideals or for extra luxury"[80]. The cooperative "positive"[81] view of human nature lies at the foundation of this argument. Activation requires trust in the cooperative attitude of others, to return to "a society based on trust"[82] or "a more social society"[83]. This reasoning also strongly resonates with the UBI pilots in the Netherlands, aptly named the 'trust experiments' (Groot, Muffels & Verlaat, 2019). More generally, the idea that stick-and-carrot incentives crowd out pro-social behaviour is central to the work of

Bowles (2016) and this form of UBI is closely related to ideas of social investment (Hemerijck, 2018).

The incentive position, on the other hand, argues that employment can be incentivized by a below-subsistence level benefit. Providing a "low UBI [with] unrestricted work on the side" motivates paid employment, referred to as a "pepper-in-the-butt system"[84]. The benefit "should be too low to live from, because you want to stimulate people to do something on the side"[85]. People must "earn on the side to supplement their insufficient [UBI]"[86]. On the supply-side, low-paid jobs can be created by deregulating the labour market. For example, abolishing "the market-disruptive minimum wage"[87] would create jobs because "labour costs will drop substantially"[88]. In this way, "you can create jobs for large groups now unwanted by employers"[89]. Although the argument is framed in terms of efficiency, this form of activation assumes retrenchment concerning both de-commodifying and redistributive policy.

To summarize, the existing welfare bureaucracy is a focal point of critique for both liberal and egalitarian proponents. Even though both see UBI as motivating paid employment, their reasoning is inversed, addressing either extrinsic or intrinsic motivations to work. Herein I see the fundamental disagreement between liberal and egalitarian versions of UBI policy (e.g. De Wispelaere, 2016; Chrisp & Martinelli, 2019).

Automation

The last controversy holds that structural unemployment is increasing due to the automation of labour, or that the number of available jobs is limited even in present-day society. This argument is fairly new to the welfare discourse and pops up in the UBI debate in multiple countries (e.g. Perkiö, Rincón & Van Draanen, 2019). The prospect of automation prompts a reflection of the "productivist welfare post-war consensus around full employment" (Noguera & Widerquist, 2013:261). In particular, the prospect of automated labour and high structural unemployment seems to threaten the principle of work-based social

security. In the automation narrative, the main justification for UBI is the lack of jobs, rather than the right to refuse work. In contrast to earlier lines of discussion, the automation narrative addresses a motive for welfare legitimacy that avoids the moral controversy surrounding the employment obligation, only the validity of the problem is challenged.

The automation narrative depicts a future where much work is done by robots: "robotization leads to the disappearance of jobs"[90], the "overcapacity of labour supply"[91], "increasing productivity"[92] etcetera. In addition, concerns about current structural unemployment are mentioned ("there aren't enough jobs for everyone"[93], "there is no work now, let alone in the future"[94]). There is some evidence suggesting that unemployment reduces support for welfare conditionality (Bußß, Ebbinghaus & Nauman, 2017). I distinguish two underlying reasonings: a systemic critique of the principle of work-based social security and invoking the deservingness of the unemployed in a world without work.

First, the prospect of high unemployment challenges the system of work-based social security. In the face of automation, observers conclude that "full employment [is] unrealistic"[95] or "an illusion"[96], and consequently we "need to search for a new economic model"[97]. From this point of view, UBI is primarily seen as a solution to structural unemployment. The "disappearance of jobs [can be] cushioned by [UBI]"[98], or more generally, UBI is "the future system of social security"[99]. The legitimacy of the welfare state rests on the availability of ample jobs, and the UBI discussion challenged the (future) tenability of that requirement. Since the necessity of work is usually beyond discussion, it is striking to see it so openly questioned.

Secondly, a lack of jobs justifies unemployment, because the work obligation loses its relevance. In the future "not everyone can work for money because the work is done by robots or jobs have been cut due to costs"[100]. Simply put, "there is no other option if there are jobs available for only 20% of the people"[101]. Consequently, the unemployed become deserving of social support: "millions of people will lose their jobs"[102], so "we cannot stimulate people to take jobs that don't exist"[103]. This relates to the perceived control over welfare dependency

(e.g. Van Oorschot et al., 2017), and suggests that the importance of deservingness criteria varies over time (Buß, Ebbinghaus & Nauman, 2017). On the opposing side of the argument, discussants simply reject the premise that future labour will be automated. Opponents here lament the lack of "factual support"[104] and note that "the end of work has been predicted for centuries"[105]. Although underdeveloped, the argument suggests that new work will be created in the process of automation, simply shifting the type of available jobs.

In sum, automation and the threat of structural unemployment are recent catalysts of the UBI debate. Newspapers in multiple countries have used the threat of automation to make the case for UBI policy (Perkiö, Rincón & Van Draanen, 2020). At first glance, this accords with studies showing higher deservingness in times of high unemployment (e.g. Laenen & Meuleman, 2017; Buß Ebbinghaus & Nauman, 2017). However, this apparent catalyst of debate has so far not proven to drive popular support for UBI policy. Existing work finds that only a very small proportion of the public is concerned that their jobs are at risk of being automated (Kurer & Häusermann, 2021). Moreover, even though those at risk are found to show a greater preference for passive income support, at-risk workers are not more likely to support UBI policy (Dermont & Weissstanner, 2020). Thus, while relevant to the public debate and potentially influential on public opinion, the automation narrative seems to be especially driven by journalist elites.

5 • CONCLUSION: FUNDAMENTAL CRITIQUES

This article set out to identify key controversies in the UBI debate through a content analysis of Dutch tweets. I identified four central controversies – different aspects along which the discussion takes place. Participants discuss UBI in terms of (a) economic redistribution, (b) welfare conditionality, (c) bureaucracy, and (d) automation. These controversies each cover multiple aspects of welfare legitimacy, particularly redistribution principles (Mau, 2003; Jaeger, 2006), welfare critiques (Roosma, Van Oorschot & Gelissen, 2016), and recipient deservingness (Van Oorschot et al., 2017). In broad strokes, the ob-

served discussion of UBI mainly regards economic redistribution and welfare conditionality. This is unsurprising since these are the major controversies of welfare politics: who pays and receives social support and what can be expected in return. The prominence of redistributive questions aligns with popular opinion across Europe, where UBI support is also chiefly motivated by redistributive concerns (e.g. Roosma & Van Oorschot, 2020). The notion of 'welfare without work' naturally sparks controversy, given the deeply embedded moral value of paid employment in society (Mau, 2003). Thus, to a large extent, existing theories of welfare legitimacy seem to fit well into the UBI debate.

Still, I recognize elements that existing welfare research does not yet capture. First, critiques of targeted activation policy show that, even while supporting the (deservingness) principles behind targeted activation policy, discussants are highly sceptical of the efficiency and effectiveness of its current implementation. The "performance-critical" view on activation policy (Roosma, Van Oorschot & Gelissen, 2014; 2016) seems crucial to understand the resonance of UBI policy. Second, the prospect of automated labour has the potential to challenge the legitimacy of work-based social security. Even though prior studies found no strong link between automation risk and support for UBI (Dermont & Weisstanner, 2020; Kurer & Häusermann, 2021), the idea of a 'world without work' does form an integral part of the UBI discussion. More in-depth research into the public attitudes towards 'post-productivism' (e.g. Van der Veen & Groot, 2006; Goodin, 2001) and its relation to welfare legitimacy is therefore warranted. Finally, the analysis of a 'live' discussion also shows that the controversies of UBI support are not equally important to everyone: proponents are more focused on conditionality and efficiency, while opponents tend to frame UBI in terms of redistributive aspects. The variety of motivations people have to support or oppose UBI point to a multidimensional policy, wherein not all policy aspects are equally supported (e.g. Dermont & Weisstanner, 2020; Rincón 2021).

Similar to Rossetti et al. (2020), I took a qualitative and exploratory approach in an attempt to complement the increasing number of studies with a more quantitative angle. I analysed the discussion taking

place on mostly purposely selected days on a single social media platform. Although much of the discussion under scrutiny was triggered and influenced by documentaries, the discussion is not a mere rehashing of arguments. A comparison of arguments in Appendix A3 has shown that while all arguments in the documentaries also appear on Twitter, some arguments – especially counterarguments – are only found on Twitter. Specific retrenchment-related arguments in favour of UBI such as abolishing the minimum wage and introducing flat-rate taxes are also not cued by the documentaries. Thus, while the documentaries emphasize the 'egalitarian' version of UBI, Twitter also features proponents (and opponents) of a 'liberal' version (De Wispelaere & Stirton, 2004). Moreover, while the documentaries lean heavily on the automation narrative (see also Perkiö Rincón & van Draanen 2019; Carroll & Engel 2021), the Twitter debate is much more focused on more traditional questions of social rights and obligations.

This study has several implications for existing research. First, support for UBI is a multidimensional construct, that should be measured by incorporating redistributive, conditional, and reform aspects. I find that these aspects consistently confound the discussion: while proponents focus on removing benefit obligations, opponents emphasize the distributional outcomes of UBI policy. Prior work has used a single indicator variable for UBI support in an attempt to explain its legitimacy (e.g. Roosma & Van Oorschot, 2020; Vlandas, 2021). Stadelmann-Steffen and Dermont (2020) have made some strides in this area with an innovative survey experiment, although they were unable to measure support for the unconditional aspect of UBI policy. Future studies should at least separate support for the redistributive aspect (the level of the benefit and manner of taxation) from support for its universal and unconditional character (e.g. no means test, no job application requirement) and the degree to which UBI replaces existing benefits.

Secondly, I find that critiques of activation policy motivate support for unconditional benefits on both sides of the political spectrum. Early welfare critiques are directed towards benefit generosity, arguing that welfare policies depress economic growth, undermine work ethic,

and erode social solidarity (Van Oorschot, Reeskens & Meuleman, 2012). Similarly, populist welfare critiques employ distrust towards corrupt and costly welfare institutions to undermine support for welfare policies (De Koster, Achterberg & Van der Waal, 2013). In the UBI discussion, welfare critiques are prominently employed to argue against benefit obligations. Means-tested benefits are considered ineffective in part because they prevent work from being sufficiently rewarding. And activation policies are thought to discourage a cooperative and trusting relationship between welfare claimants and government officials. These critiques problematize the targeted activation policy paradigm, and in doing so may provide a basis of legitimacy for a 'social investment' approach to social assistance (Hemerijck, 2018), and the legitimacy of UBI itself.

Finally, the prevalence of the redistribution and conditionality controversies in part reflects a certain conceptual confusion, i.e. whether UBI redistributes income or not, and whether it encourages or discourages paid employment (De Wispelaere & Stirton, 2004). The co-existing conceptualizations of UBI policy have led some to argue that UBI is "beyond left and right" (Reed & Lansley, 2016): its "unique potential (...) as the basis for a coalition of supporters from left and right" (Murray, 2008) yields "support across the political spectrum, from the right and left, from pro-marketeers as well as social democratic interventionists" (Reed & Lansley, 2016). This view has been challenged by others who find "persistent political division" underneath the leftist and rightist approaches to UBI (De Wispelaere, 2016), due to "intractable policy design trade-offs" (Chrisp & Martinelli, 2019:477). Unfortunately, my focus on identifying the arguments in favour and against UBI has come at the cost of disregarding the political actors behind these arguments. One of the open questions in this area is therefore a thorough analysis of which partisans endorse which frames, to further develop the political feasibility of UBI (e.g. De Wispeleare & Noguera, 2012). In the following chapter I turn to the "struggle over interpretation" and the discursive coalitions in the UBI debate.

4 Between Left and Right

A Discourse Network Analysis of Universal Basic Income on Dutch Twitter

ABSTRACT

Universal Basic Income (UBI) found its way back to media and policy agendas, presented as an alternative to the social investment policies omnipresent in Europe. Despite the apparent appeal, however, UBI faces a discursive and political stalemate that seems hard to overcome. In an attempt to understand this tension, I explore the discursive coalitions surrounding UBI in a debate on Dutch Twitter. I use discourse network analysis to (a) cluster discussants endorsing similar positions and (b) see which political elites endorse these positions. I find that the known schism between the liberal and egalitarian interpretations of UBI is driven by ambivalence towards its redistributive implications. Moreover, I observe a turn towards social investment frames amongst UBI advocates, who centrally argue that UBI is activating and deregulating social security. This change in framing, however, seems to have little visible impact on elite coalition formation. Green-left elites remain overrepresented amongst proponents, while liberals and conservatives are opposed, and the socialist party remains divided on the issue. Thus, while the implementation of a 'full' UBI seems blocked by

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redistributive concerns, the social investment turn may be the political compromise that explains the popular appeal and political success of UBI-inspired experiments.

1 • INTRODUCTION

In recent years, Universal Basic Income (UBI) has been featured in public and political debates as a way to reform welfare states. Intending to provide an unconditional income to all citizens, the policy managed to attract the attention of journalists (Perkiö, Rincón & van Draanen 2019) and policy makers (Perkiö 2020, Browne & Immervoll 2017) in various counties. In conjunction with this newfound attention, pilot projects have been conducted in various developed democracies, including Finland (De Wispelaere, Halmetoja & Pulkka 2018) and the United States (Baker et al. 2020). The debate surrounding UBI has also featured prominently in the Netherlands: after an initial wave of attention in the early 1980s (Groot & Van der Veen 2000), a second discussion erupted in the period 2014-2016 (see Bregman 2014), culminating in experiments with unconditional social assistance in several municipalities (Groot, Muffels & Verlaat 2019, Van der Veen 2019).

Despite the apparent appeal, however, UBI faces a political stalemate that seems hard to overcome. The momentum for UBI policy is met with resistance from both public and politicians on the way to its implementation. The Swiss referendum to implement a UBI was comfortably rejected (Liu 2020), and the experiments with unconditional social assistance in Finland and the Netherlands seem to have had little impact on the political coalition surrounding UBI, especially on the national level (but see Roosma 2022).

On the surface, this lack of support seems difficult to understand. UBI policy has been heralded as 'beyond left and right' because it could unite the three central fractions in welfare politics (e.g. Reed & Lansley 2016; also see Schwander & Vlandas 2020): UBI would protect workers from capitalist exploitation while increasing individual freedom and promoting labour and social participation. Some have argued that the guaranteed income security provided by UBI strengthens the

bargaining power of workers versus employers (Wright 2006, see also Van der Veen & Van Parijs 1986). Others have made the case for UBI as a libertarian policy that affords "real freedom" from their obligation to work (Van Parijs 1991; Fromm 1966). Others still have taken a position of social investment, arguing that UBI stimulates sustainable employment and other valuable social activities by removing work disincentives from the existing system of social security (e.g. Friedman 2013, see also Perkiö 2020). In Chapter 3 I have shown that these three frames are also adopted in the Dutch UBI debate. From the 'beyond left and right' perspective, the applications of these strands of ideology to UBI policy implies "support across the political spectrum, from the right and left, from pro-marketeers as well as social democratic interventionists" (Reed & Lansley 2016; see also Barry 1996:3; Torry 2016:168; Purdy 2013:483). Its advocates consequently argue that UBI has "unique potential (...) as the basis for a coalition of supporters from left and right" (Murray, 2008).

Others have been more sceptical, arguing that these three policy goals – security, freedom and efficiency – are not always complementary, referring to distinct and even incompatible policy proposals (e.g. De Wispelaere & Stirton 2004; Chrisp & Martinelli 2019; De Wispelaere 2016). For example, depending on the level of the grant, replacement of existing benefits and the funding mechanism, UBI policy can either increase income security and 'decommodify' work or inversely, retrench the welfare state and strengthen activating work incentives. The existence of different interpretations of UBI policy also explains why UBI has been opposed in the past by an unlikely coalition of trade unions (e.g. Vanderbroght 2006) and liberal-conservatives (Groot & Van der Veen 2000:200). De Wispelaere and Stirton (2004) have referred to the coexistence of multiple interpretations as "many faces" perspective on UBI. In this chapter I analyse the coalitional structure of the UBI debate on Dutch Twitter, contributing to the literature in two ways. First, analysing discursive coalitions provides a nuanced descriptive account of UBI support amongst the (Twitter) public and political parties– i.e. what arguments unite and divide proponents and opponents. Twitter is not representative of the overall political debate

but constitutes a unique amalgamation of influencers from the public, politics and media. As such, the analysis complements narrative accounts that reflect on coalitional aspects of the UBI debate (e.g. Groot & Van der Veen 2000; Sloman 2018; Vanderbroght 2006) and representative survey studies on the public legitimacy of UBI (e.g. Roosma & Van Oorschot 2020; Busemeyer & Sahm 2021; Rincón, Vlandas & Hillamo 2022, Stadelman-Steffen & Dermont). Second, in identifying these coalitions, the analysis accounts for the different interpretations of UBI policy that may feature in the debate. In Chapter 3 I have already shown that frames regarding security, freedom and efficiency are used on Twitter, a recurring finding in newspaper articles in various countries and timepoints (e.g. Perkiö 2020; Perkiö, Rincón & van Draanen 2019; Steensland 2008). However, the focus on individual frames ignores the relation between frames, i.e. what combinations of frames are endorsed or opposed by the same actors. Even though many frames feature in the discussion, we do not know to what extent they are used in conjunction – as suggested by the 'beyond left and right' thesis – or in isolation – as implied by the 'many faces' interpretation. As a consequence, we still know little about which frames unite and divide participants in the debate. To these ends, and in line with the third research question of this dissertation, I ask:

Which discursive coalitions emerge and which political representatives endorse these positions?

Based on this outline I present some contrasting expectations regarding the coalitional structure of the UBI debate in Table 4.1. The coalitional structure of the debate can be understood in two ways. First, discussants may agree substantively on their position towards UBI. UBI is 'beyond left and right' if discussants tend to combine socialist, liberal and social investment perspectives on UBI. UBI has 'many faces' when discussants tend to endorse some perspectives but not others. Second, the endorsement of positions by political representatives indicates a potential political alliance concerning UBI. In this sense, UBI is 'beyond left and right' if political representatives from various party families

TABLE 4.1 Preliminary expectations

	Beyond left and right	Many faces
Substantive position	H1a. Discussants tend to frame UBI as a combination of socialist, liberal and social investment policy	H1b. Discussants tend to frame UBI exclusively in terms of socialist, liberal or social investment policy
Elite endorsement	H2a. Political representatives from different party families endorse and oppose the same UBI frames	H2b. Political representatives from different party families endorse and oppose different UBI frames

endorse the same substantive position. UBI has 'many faces' when political representatives are divided between positions along party lines.

I employ discourse network analysis (Leifeld 2017) to model frames and actors in a UBI debate on Dutch Twitter. The method is based on network theory and designed specifically to combine the analysis of frames and actors, by connecting actors based on how strongly they agree or disagree across various arguments. It allows me to measure the substantive positions of individual participants, and to cluster participants based on the similarity of their arguments. Twitter is the right medium to analyse the debate because UBI went 'viral' on Twitter several times, preceding extensive traditional media coverage and the "basic income inspired" trust experiments (for an extensive discussion see Chapter 3). Twitter is also a particularly political medium, with many politicians attending and contributing to discussions. Despite (or perhaps because of) being a selective and disproportionally 'elite' group of people, the most recent Dutch discussion on UBI took place especially on Twitter.

In the remainder of this chapter I first elaborate on the context of the Dutch UBI debate, after which I present the data and methods used in this analysis. Next, in the results section, I discuss the identified

positions and the political elites endorsing them. I find a proponent coalition that adopts a substantive position 'beyond left and right', which is endorsed almost exclusively by (green-)leftist political elites. Opponents feature both (socialist) leftist and rightist elites, and despite substantial disagreement, they are united by their dedication to the work obligation and their concern over higher income taxes. The substantively cross-partisan substantive position of proponents has not attracted a cross-partisan coalition of political actors, justifying the observation that UBI is between left and right.

2 • THE DUTCH UBI DEBATE IN CONTEXT

The involvement of political elites in the Dutch Twitter debate should be placed both in the context of contemporary welfare coalitions and the history of UBI debate in the Netherlands. As in many other European countries, contemporary welfare coalitions in the Netherlands revolve around social investment and active labour market policies (Hemerijck 2017; Gilbert 2002). These policies intend to enable and incentivize labour market participation, on the one hand through childcare services and education and on the other hand by emphasizing the responsibility of citizens to contribute in the form of paid employment or caring tasks (Verhoeven & Tonkens 2013). This new 'participation' welfare was established primarily by liberal-led coalitions since the turn of the century, although these policies have been backed by both conservative and labour parties as well. The social investment turn can be considered a welfare compromise because such policies mainly cater to the new middle classes and the employers collective, while simultaneously appealing to the pro-work values of the working classes (Gingrich & Hausermann 2015:52-5). Still, the parties differ in their emphasis on welfare aspects, which relates to their historical role in the welfare debate. Leftist parties still value providing minimum income protection for the poorest in society, while liberal and conservative parties have taken responsibility for protecting the welfare state against financial collapse (Green-Pedersen 2001).

The political support for the UBI proposal is situated within this

broader landscape of 'old' and 'new' welfare politics. First, UBI policy has never been a flagship proposal of any mainstream political party but was instead repeatedly brought to the political agenda by activists and policy experts. UBI policy was extensively discussed during the 1980s (Groot & Van der Veen 2000) when the union of food workers (Voedingsbond FNV) and the national scientific advisory board (WRR) launched UBI proposals to reform social security. The most recent wave of attention was driven by fringe journalism and amplified by Twitter audiences. Based on the work of publicist Rutger Bregman (2013,2014), the future affairs program Tegenlicht (2014, 2015) aired three documentaries on Dutch national broadcast television, two of which became trending topics on Dutch Twitter. These documentaries proposed UBI policy because it would (a) provide income security in the face of automation, (b) allow the working poor to invest in education, childcare, and basic goods, and also (c) increase happiness, and social trust, and reduce poverty stress. For an extensive discussion see the data section in Chapter 3.

Political parties have responded to these UBI proposals in both waves fairly consistently (Groot & Van der Veen 2000). Evangelical radicals, the Green Left and Liberal Democrats (D66) have shown sympathy towards UBI proposals, but their endorsement may be seen as "cheap support" (De Wispeleare 2016:132). These parties have dedicated some words in support of UBI in their political manifestos, but have not shown the capacity or commitment to building coalitions to implement UBI. Labour parties and unions have rejected the UBI proposals after considerable discussion, fearing that the policy would erode workers' rights and trigger a spiralling increase in wages and prices. The conservative (CDA) and liberal (VVD) parties have either ignored or opposed these proposals, chiefly because UBI would undermine the work ethic and defies the contribution principle underlying existing social security.

However, in the most recent wave of attention, the reluctance towards UBI on the national level was countered with an enthusiasm from local political elites (Roosma 2022). In response to the attention for UBI and the call for experimenting with such a policy, a dozen of

Dutch municipalities initiated experiments with unconditional social assistance. It seems the public enthusiasm for UBI came at the right time: the decentralization of social assistance benefits from the national to the municipal level came with financial struggles, and some municipal councils doubted the effectiveness of activating incentives (Groot, Muffels & Verlaat, 2019). While these experiments were "inspired" by the UBI discussion (p. 280), they were framed as 'trust experiments' to avoid the political controversy surrounding UBI policy. The trust experiments investigated whether removing 'stick-and-carrot' incentives attached to social assistance benefits would improve the well-being of social assistance beneficiaries and their chance of finding a job.

3 • DATA AND METHODS

In the following section I first present my sampling and data collection strategy. After a brief discussion of the content analysis underpinning my analysis, I elaborate on the analytical procedure used to identify substantive positions.

Data Collection

Tweets are gathered by entering the key word 'basic income' ('basisinkomen') in the Twitter search engine. This term is almost exclusively used to refer to UBI, also including variations such as 'universal basic income'.[1] To ensure capturing the full discussion, up to nine replies to every initial tweet were gathered using the Twitter API. I decided to stop here because the number of ninth-reply tweets is already negligible (1.1 per cent of tweets) and the discussion tends to become redundant or off-topic.

For this analysis, I purposively selected all tweets posted on three essential days: the airing of the second documentary (2014-09-21), the third documentary (2015-04-12) and the day of the announcement

[1] A post-hoc supplementary search with keywords "UBI" and "OBI" (the Dutch equivalent) confirms that the vast majority of tweets is included by the original search.

of the trust experiments (2015-08-05), amounting to a total of 5128 tweets sent by 1369 unique actors.[2] Figure 4.1 – already presented in Chapter 3 – shows that these three events attracted the most attention from the Twitter audience and thereby illustrate their primary importance for the broader discussion. A random sample of days would ignore the event-centred nature of (social) media, where some days are simply more important than others for particular policy debates. The three selected days are also the most relevant because they are the three major events in the Dutch context. The first documentary is relatively marginally discussed: only the second and third documentaries became trending topics on Dutch Twitter. The last event regards the Swiss referendum which occurs outside the Dutch policy context. This purposive sample thus reflects the major initial response to the most influential media events surrounding UBI policy in the Netherlands.

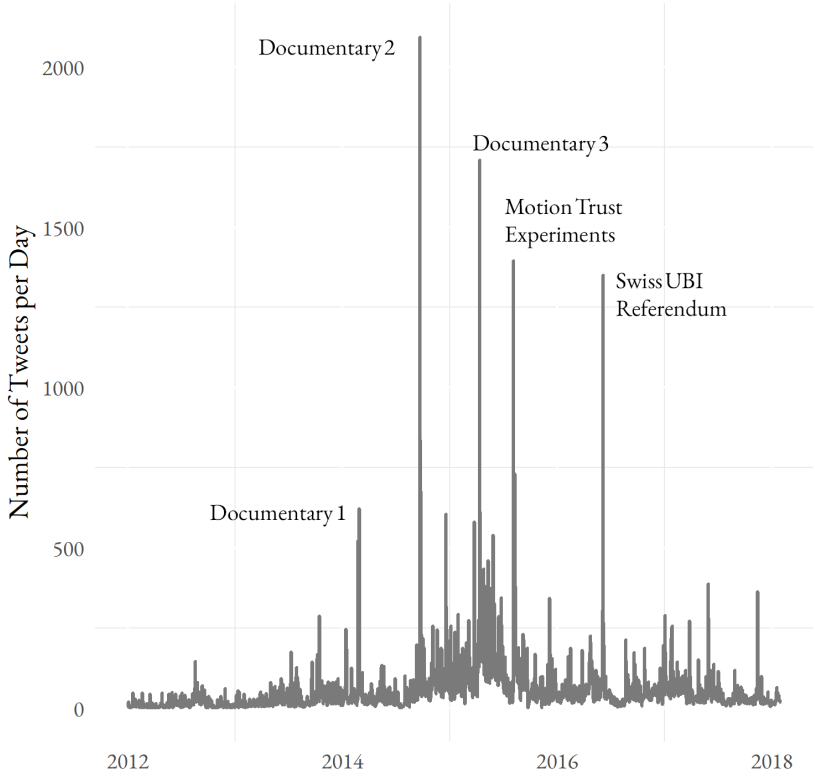
I have gathered the Twitter usernames of political representatives from Politwoops[3], a website dedicated to storing tweets from Dutch politicians in case they are deleted. This list includes representatives in all levels of government, most notably the parliament and municipal councils. Ex-representatives are also included since they are likely to still be influential in the political arena. Political parties from local fractions (i.e. parties without representation in the national parliament) are excluded from the analysis, to allow for easier interpretation of elite positions. A cross-reference shows that 49 political representatives contributed to the UBI debate during the sampled period, among which 17 from the green-left (GL), 9 socialists (SP), 6 progressive-liberals (D66), 6 conservatives (CDA), 5 labour (PvdA), 5 liberals (VVD) and 1 from a special interest party (50plus). Political elites sent a total of 203 tweets, and are more active than most other users: the median elite sent 2 tweets in the debate under observation, while the median non-elite sent only 1 tweet (mean is 3.84).

To assess the involvement of political parties in the UBI debate, I

[2] The sample is smaller than in Chapter 2 due to the exclusion of the 10 randomly sampled days used to establish the generalizability of the coding scheme

[3] https://politwoops.nl/

FIGURE 4.1 Daily volume of tweets and replies mentioning Universal Basic Income



compared their engagement with their (national) party activity during the 2010 parliamentary elections (see Appendix A4). The conservative parties (CU and SGP) and the far-right party (PVV) do not engage at all in the UBI debate. This is somewhat surprising considering the history of political support amongst conservative parties (Groot & Van der Veen 2000) and the relatively high levels of support for UBI policy amongst the Dutch conservative constituency observed in Chapter 2. Representatives from liberal (VVD), conservative (CDA) and labour (PvdA) parties are proportionally underrepresented in the UBI debate

compared to their engagement in the election campaign. The greens (GL) and socialists (SP) are overrepresented. Socialists stand out due to their relatively large number of tweets sent: they wrote 44.3 per cent of the total elite tweets sent in the UBI debate, and post much more frequently in the UBI debate compared to other elites in the election campaign.

Content Analysis

The unit of observation in this study is a claim (i.e. a positive or negative reference to a concept) made by an actor. To identify these claims, I performed an extensive content analysis in Chapter 3 (see also Krippendorf 2018), wherein I developed and refined a coding scheme containing 55 unique arguments. An overview and example of each concept are provided in Appendix C3.

Claims consist of a concept and position regarding that concept (i.e. proposing or refuting that argument, or taking a neutral stance towards an argument). For each tweet, I coded up to three concepts and their corresponding positions. For example, consider the tweet "a #basicincome grants freedom of choice; stimulates creativity and entrepreneurship"[105]. This tweet contains two concepts – freedom and entrepreneurship – and each concept is referred to positively. Inversely, the claim that basic income "discourages saving (=becoming independent)"[106] negatively refers to the concept of freedom. When no argument could be discerned, tweets were coded into several miscellaneous categories (e.g. argument is unclear, asking a question, spam, unrelated, tweet is part of a series, emotional expression without argument).[4]

The reliability of the final coding scheme was assessed through intercoder reliability. The sample was constructed using a stratified random

[4] 34.1% of tweets fall into one of these miscellaneous categories. This shows that 'shitposting', casual conversation and emotional expression are fairly common on Twitter. The 65.9% of relevant tweets, however, show that the platform has more to offer than just 'pointless babble' (Kelly 2009) and can occasionally function as a deliberative space (see Rogers 2014)

sample: I randomly selected 9 tweets for each category (including the miscellaneous category), amounting to a total of 414 tweets (7.3% of the full sample). Two coders agreed on 96.7% of labels. Correcting for agreement by chance yields an average reliability of κ=.430 across categories. Chapter 3 provides an extensive discussion of the procedures.

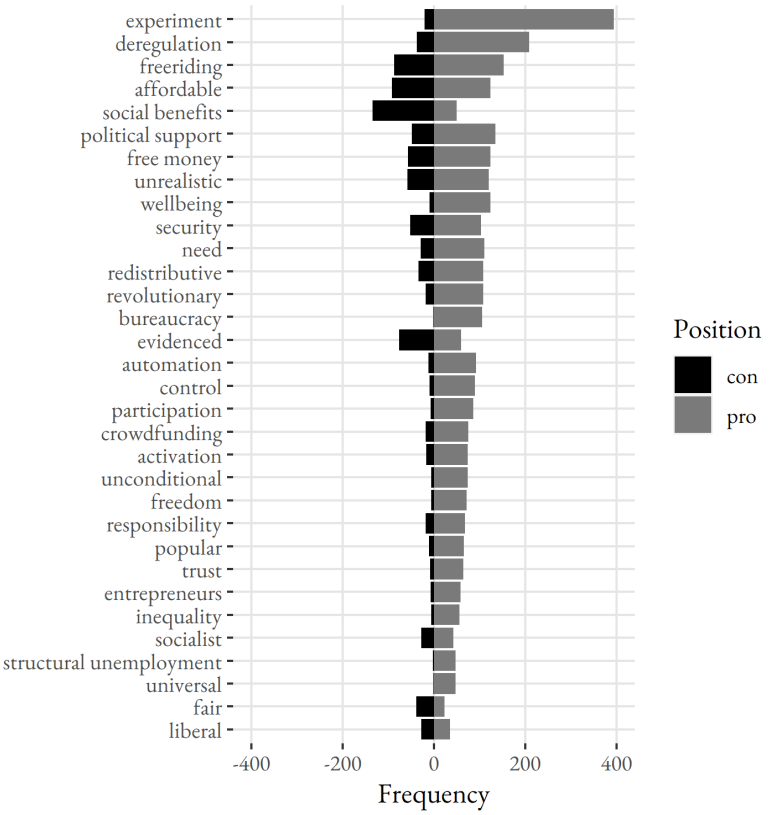
The occurrence frequency of each concept is presented in Figure 4.2. The most popular (or controversial) concepts featured in the discussion regard the call to experiment with UBI, using UBI as a tool to deregulate the welfare system, the freeriding objection (people will become lazy etc.) and the question of UBI's affordability (who will pay for it). Very rarely used arguments, with less than one per cent of total mentions, are excluded from the plot.

Discourse Network Analysis

To identify discursive positions in the debate, I employ discourse network analysis (Leifeld 2017) in conjunction with a clustering algorithm (Traag & Bruggeman 2008). Discourse network analysis models policy debates as networks, wherein a clustering procedure – also known as community detection – assigns participants that tend to agree to the same coalition. I only provide a short overview of the method here. For the technical details of the procedure please see Appendix B4.

First, I construct a network of (dis)agreement relations between participants in the debate. During the content analysis, I identified which arguments participants adopt and whether they agree or disagree with these arguments. Positive relations indicate that participants tend to agree on the same arguments. Inversely, negative relations indicate disagreement between participants. The more concepts people (dis)agree on, the stronger the connection. Figure 4.3 shows an example of a disagreement relation. Some operational choices deserve to be mentioned here. First, I consider only *whether* a user employs an argument, not *how often* a user does. Second, I combine agreement and disagreement relations in a single network, effectively in the way described by Leifeld (2017:313) as the "subtract" method. Lastly, unlike the example shown in Figure 4.3, connections between arguments in the

FIGURE 4.2 Adoption frequency per concept

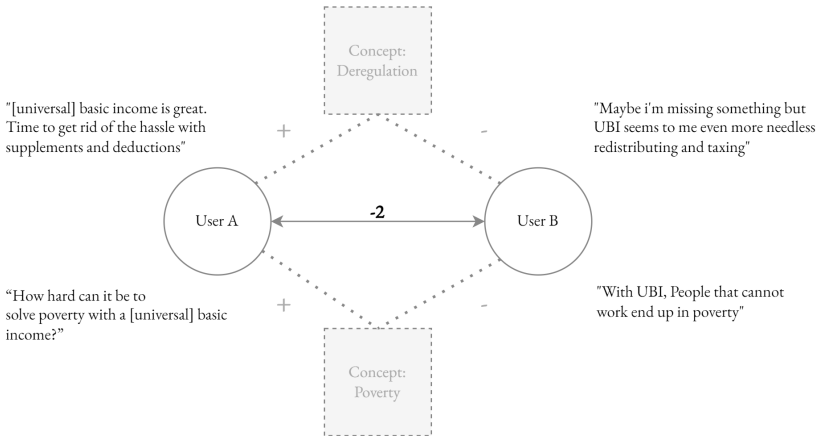


Note: For interpretability, we show only arguments with an adoption frequency of one per cent (42 of 55 concepts)

final network are normalized – falling in the range -1, 1 – to make tie strength independent of the number of tweets sent.

To identify discursive positions in the UBI debate, participants are clustered using a variant of spin-glass community detection that accounts for negative weights (Traag & Bruggeman 2008). Participants that tend to agree are assigned to the same cluster, while participants that tend to disagree are assigned to a different cluster. A perfectly mod-

FIGURE 4.3 Example of a connection in the actor-network based on the underlying arguments (one-mode projection)



ular network would have only positive relations within clusters and negative relations between clusters, with a corresponding modularity of Q=1. In practice, the algorithm searches for the optimal clustering solution, minimizing disagreement within clusters and agreement between clusters. When the clusters are assigned, the discursive position of each cluster can be recovered by plotting the argument frequencies per cluster (similar to Figure 4.1). It is also easy to see which politicians belong to which cluster.

4 • RESULTS

The UBI debate on Dutch Twitter consists of 4 large clusters: proponents, opponents, experiment promoters and political promoters.[5] Figure 4.4 illustrates the structural topology of the actor agreement network and the clustering of actors. The experiment promotors and

[5] Community detection partitioned the graph in 8 clusters (Q=.390), but 4 of these are very small. Since the four largest clusters contain 97.1% of all actors, I focus my interpretation on these clusters.

political promotors are the most cohesive groups, due to their lack of engagement with substantive arguments. In addition, regardless of their disagreement, the polarization of opponents and proponents is not extreme: there appears to be a gradient where some agreement between them exists. In the remainder of this section, I first discuss the substantive position of these clusters and a short note on the development of the debate between the three timepoints, followed by the centrality of arguments in the debate. Finally, I analyse which political party representatives endorse these positions.

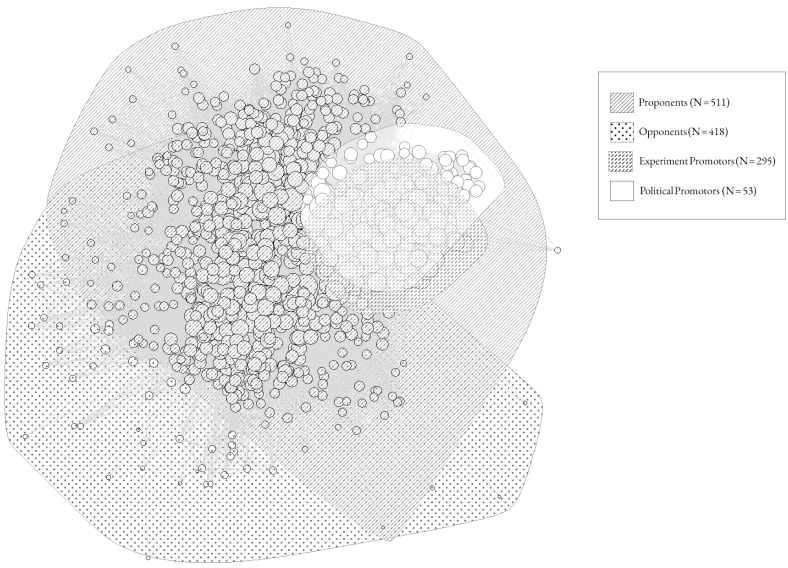
The analysis points to three main findings. First, while UBI proponents endorse a UBI that is 'beyond left and right', both proponents and opponents are ambivalent towards the redistributive implications of UBI policy (e.g. De Wispelaere 2016; De Wispelaere & Stirton 2004). Second, UBI proponents seem to have turned to social investment discourse, with arguments on activating the unemployed and removing work disincentives being remarkably central to the debate (see also Perkiö 2020). Third, the political coalition surrounding UBI seems very stable. Political elites proposing UBI are predominantly (green-)left, while liberal and conservative parties are opposed. The socialist party is divided in their support of UBI (see also Vanderbrought 2006; Steensland 2008).

Substantive positions

To gain a proper understanding of the positions in the debate I first discuss the argument frequencies of each cluster, presented in Figure 4.5. Solid shaded cells indicate that a cluster agrees on an argument, white cells indicate silence or ambivalence, and dotted shaded cells indicate disagreement. Note that while chosen for its simplicity, this method does not distinguish between a lack of ties (no references) and ambivalent ties (an equal or near-equal amount of positive and negative references). Both are shaded towards white in the heatmap. To show which arguments are ambivalent, the positive and negative references are separated in Appendix C4.

The largest cluster (N=511) consists of *proponents*, who combine

FIGURE 4.4 The clustered actor-network



Note: For purposes of visualization the graph is based on agreement ties only. Node size is proportional to tie strength – larger nodes represent actors in stronger agreement with others. The graph layout is based on the Fruchterman-Reingold algorithm, where actors that agree more strongly are placed closer together. Only ties with strength greater than the threshold of .60 are plotted. Community detection partitioned the graph into 8 clusters (Q=.390), but 4 of these are very small. Since the four largest clusters contain 97.1% of all actors, we focus our interpretation on these four clusters.

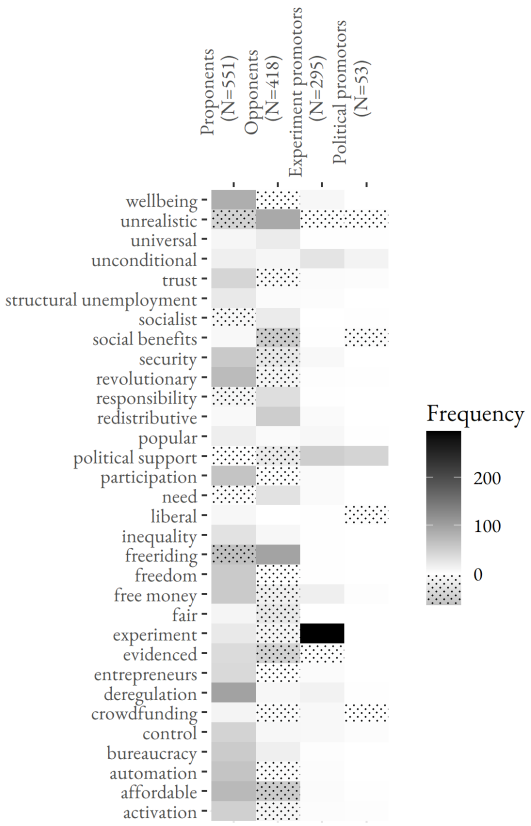
elements from socialist, liberal and social investment discourse (e.g. Schwander & Vlandas 2020). The position is perhaps best summarized by the idea that UBI "makes people more entrepreneurial, happier and healthier"[107]. The egalitarian aspect of this position is anchored in the "income security"[108] that UBI must provide. Moreover, the uncondi-

tionality of UBI – conceptualized as freedom from "wage slavery"[109] – is thought to divert the basis of social relations away from work, towards a "more social society"[110]. This transition is supposed to be facilitated by the automation of labour. Its liberal aspect entails that UBI would reduce bureaucratic complexity[111] by "replacing all benefits"[112] and "abolishing minimum wage laws"[113], while "increasing labour productivity"[114]. A social investment component is found in the efficiency and activating aspects of UBI. UBI is supposed to activate the unemployed, "stimulating people to work on the side"[115] by removing "negative incentives"[116] or "barriers to work"[117] and allowing them to perform unpaid work in a true "participation society"[118]. In the same vein, proponents reject the claim that UBI will lead to freeriding behaviour. Note there is a tension between wanting to incentivize labour market participation (see also Friedman 2013) and the freedom from wage labour (e.g. Van Parijs 1991). Regardless, I find that proponents tend to combine these arguments into a single proponent position.

Appendix C4 additionally shows that proponents are ambivalent towards the redistributive aspect of UBI policy. Proponents are divided as to whether UBI is retrenching the welfare state (regarding the arguments 'liberal' and 'need') or expanding current welfare provision (regarding the arguments 'redistributive' and 'socialist'). The question of 'who pays and who benefits' is often left unaddressed by proponents of UBI policy: hiding the redistributive implications behind a "veil of vagueness" (De Wispelaere 2016:136) has been a strategy to unite rightists and leftist proponents. Here I show, however, that avoiding the redistributive question also opens a window to generate doubt and divide proponents.

The second largest cluster (N=418) is composed of UBI *opponents*. They share the vision that UBI is unrealistic and unfair to the working population. Both leftist and rightist opponents believe in work as a moral responsibility. The leftist opposition finds that "you should contribute to society if you can, and be rewarded for it"[119]. The rightist opposition similarly contends that "income is generated by working and not by doing nothing"[120]. Moreover, the leftist and rightist oppo-

FIGURE 4.5 Discursive positions of each cluster



Note: for interpretability, we show only arguments with at least one per cent of all concept references (45 out of 4477). A tweet example of each concept is available in Appendix C3. Solid cells indicate agreement with a concept and dotted cells indicate disagreement with a concept. Stronger (dis)agreement is marked as a darker shade of grey.

sition is united by their lack of faith in the feasibility of the proponent's proposal. UBI is deemed "utopian"[121] and "unaffordable"[122], and the evidence from earlier pilots is considered unconvincing. The opposi-

tion thus opposes UBI from a pro-work perspective and is united by a lack of faith in its feasibility.

Despite this unity, I also find substantive disagreement amongst opponents. Leftists and rightists oppose a different interpretation of UBI, as shown by the contradicting arguments endorsed by opponents. For example, the opposed socialist elites argue that UBI is "an invention of liberals"[123] that provides an income "below the poverty line"[124], where especially those unable to work would be worse off. Rightist political elites oppose the supposed redistributive effects: "free money doesn't exist"[125], because eventually "you and I will pay for it"[126]. The opposed conservatives in my dataset are concerned that UBI attracts immigrants[127], which in turn erodes support for UBI[128]. Their different view on what UBI is supposed to achieve is also expressed in the ambivalence towards the deregulatory aspect of UBI (see Appendix C4). I infer that participants opposing welfare state retrenchment endorse the deregulation argument, while participants opposing welfare state expansion reject the deregulation argument.

The third cluster (N=295) is focused almost exclusively on promoting UBI experiments. In the first instance, they promote the call for experimenting with UBI that was featured in the first discussion-triggering documentary. For instance, "especially for all mayors: change the TV channel to #tegenlicht and watch the episode on [UBI]. Pilot site wanted!"[129]. Later, these people share news items regarding the experiments with unconditional social assistance inspired by UBI: "municipalities want a pilot with [UBI]"[130] and "experiment with social assistance 'without conditions' in Utrecht"[131]. The experiment cluster does not contribute to the debate substantively, but the intention behind promoting these experiments seems generally to create political momentum and draw positive attention to UBI.

Finally, a related small cluster (N=53) addresses politicians and discusses the political momentum for UBI. These political promoters initially actively recruit politicians to advocate UBI. For example: "which political party dares to include this [UBI] in their program[132]" and "where has the enthusiasm of #d66 [progressive-liberals] gone? Go: on the political agenda"[133]. Later, this cluster of actors continues to moni-

tor the political momentum, with notices such as "motion accepted to investigate [UBI]"[134]. Similar to the promotors of experiments, these actors try to draw positive attention to UBI by promoting particular news items, rather than substantively arguing in favour of UBI.

A short reflection on the development of the UBI debate across the three timepoints is also in order. The actor graph and corresponding substantive positions are included in Appendix E4. A temporal comparison shows that the proponents' positions on the first day are separated between a more liberal UBI focussed on deregulation and affordability (cluster 1) and a more egalitarian UBI focussed on freedom and well-being (cluster 4). These groups merge into one proponent cluster on the second and third days, suggesting that the framing broadened and unified in later episodes of discussion. The second day features a cluster (cluster 6) particularly devoted to discussing UBI as the solution to structural unemployment due to automation. These 'defenders' of the utopia propagated by Bregman (2014) are rather small and detached from the broader discussion at this point. The third day features a particularly strong discussion of experiments and political support (which makes sense as the municipal trust experiments are announced on this day) and a relatively strong opponent offensive (they seem to become active in an attempt to discredit or stop these experiments). The proponents are relatively disorganized on this last day of debate.

In sum, even though proponents combine socialist, libertarian and social investment arguments – particularly in the later stages of the debate – speculation surrounding the redistributive implications of UBI remain a source of ambivalence amongst both proponents and opponents. Opponents frame UBI policy both as a form of welfare retrenchment and expansion, while proponents do not take a unified position towards these counterarguments. The schism between the liberal and egalitarian interpretations of UBI (e.g. De Wispelaere 2016, De Wispelaere & Stirton 2004) thus seems driven primarily by inverse redistributive concerns amongst socialist and liberal opponents.

Central and Peripheral Arguments

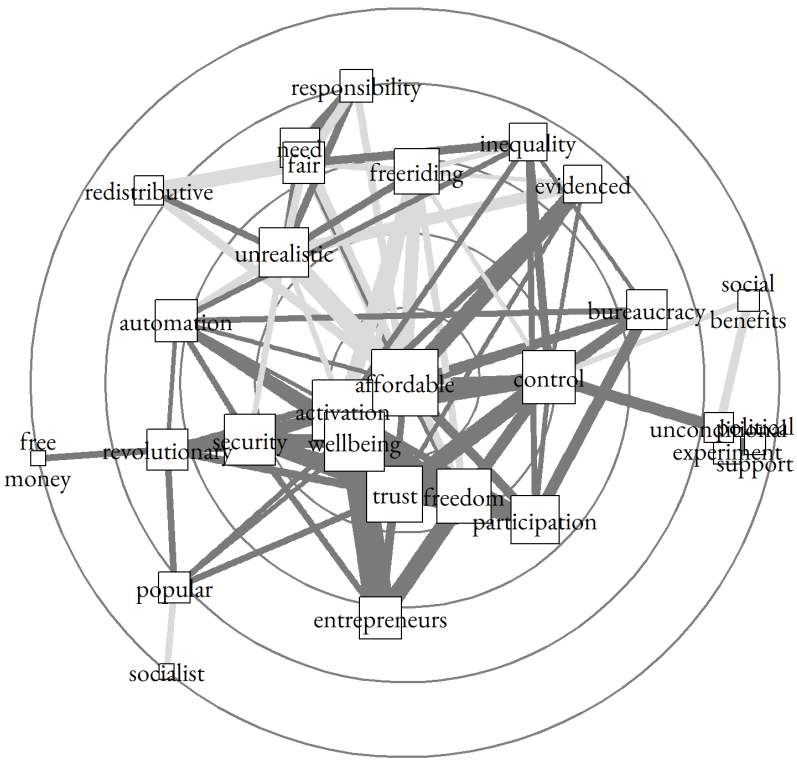
To find out which arguments dominate the UBI debate on Dutch Twitter, I turn to the concept network in Figure 4.6. Arguments in the centre of the graph are used in conjunction with many other arguments, or in other words, central arguments are discussed by a wide variety of actors. The connections are shded according to which group of actors tend to connect them: connections are dark grey when proponents tend to co-adopt two arguments, and light grey when opponents do so. The shade thus reflect the framing efforts of proponents and opponents, showing where the substantive discussion between proponents and opponents meet (see also Leifeld & Haunss 2012:398).

The concept networks point to three interesting findings. First, the affordability of UBI is the most central concern in the debate. Proponents defend the affordability of UBI especially by linking it to the savings introduced by deregulation: "it would provide huge savings in disappeared bureaucracy"[135] and "the gains are in savings on the civil service"[136]. Opponents centrally dismiss UBI as unaffordable and unrealistic. Neither proponents nor opponents convincingly dominate the concept of affordability, which points to a discursive stalemate regarding this central argument. The centrality of affordability further emphasizes the importance of the redistributive implications of UBI to the discussion.

Second, several arguments related to social investment are remarkably central to the proponent position: activation of the unemployed, deregulation of the system of social security, and to a lesser extent encouraging unpaid participation, and a less distrustful attitude towards welfare recipients. These arguments – activation, deregulation, participation, well-being and trust – are predominantly connected by proponents. Whereas earlier episodes of the debate were more centred around the emancipation of workers and women as well as redistributive justice (e.g. Groot & Van der Veen 2000; Steensland 2008), the current case for UBI policy has focussed on social investment discourse (see also Perkiö 2020).

Third, the concept network suggests that proponents built a more

FIGURE 4.6 Concept-network of the UBI debate on Dutch Twitter



Note: Arguments are plotted using (absolute) radial centrality, meaning that more central arguments are closer to the centre of the graph. Node size is proportional to degree centrality – larger squares represent concepts more frequently used in conjunction with others. Tie width is proportional to the strength of (dis)agreement. Connections made predominantly by proponents are shaded dark grey, and connections made predominantly by opponents are light grey. Only standardized ties stronger than the threshold of .08 are plotted.

coherent case in favour of UBI than opponents did against UBI. The arguments used by proponents are central and strongly interconnected,

which shows that many proponents endorse or oppose these arguments conjointly, which is "a sign of a well-integrated discourse coalition" (Leifeld & Haunss 2012:399). Thus, the proponent case for a UBI that is 'beyond left and right' seems to have been made coherently. Moreover, the green lines between proponent and opponent arguments – particularly surrounding the lack of realism – indicate that proponents are actively and substantively refuting counterarguments. Conversely, opponents are particularly focussed on arguing that UBI is unaffordable and unrealistic, mainly by claiming it is insufficient to care for the needy and encourages freeriding behaviour.

Actor Endorsement

Finally, I analyse which political elites endorse the discursive positions formed on Dutch Twitter. The wide range of arguments used to endorse UBI suggests that the policy proposal is indeed 'beyond left and right'. If this is truly the case, however, both leftist and rightist politicians should also endorse the proponent position. The cross-tabulation in Table 4.2 shows the distribution of political representatives for each discursive position. I find first that the proponent position is predominantly backed by the (green) left and opposed by liberals and conservatives. Of all elites endorsing the proponent position, 47 per cent is green left, compared to only 7 per cent amongst opponents. Similarly, 13 per cent of proponent elites belong to the labour party, while none of the labour elites is opposed. Socialists are a large fraction of the proponents (27 per cent) but are equally well-represented among opponents (29 per cent). Socialists are also significantly underrepresented amongst the experiment promotors. Rightists and conservatives are mostly opposed to UBI. Compared to the null distribution, opponent elites are significantly less likely to be green-left (7 per cent) and significantly more likely to be liberal (36 per cent). The conservatives are also relatively strongly represented amongst opponents (21 per cent), but also seem to be calling for experimenting with UBI (17 per cent). The one conservative on the proponent side has a substantively neutral stance towards UBI: "I

TABLE 4.2 Proportion of political elites endorsing each substantive position

	Liberal-egalitarian	Opponents		Experiment promotors		Political promotors	N
Green-Left	0.47	0.07	**	0.50		0.33	16
Socialists (SP)	0.27	0.29		0.00	*	0.17	9
Christian-Democrats (CDA)	0.07	0.21		0.17		0.00	6
Democrats (D66)	0.07	0.07		0.17		0.33	6
Labour (PvdA)	0.13	0.00		0.17		0.17	5
Liberals (VVD)	0.00	0.36	***	0.00		0.00	5

Note: Column percentages are reported in cells. Overall differences are significant (two-sided) based on Fisher's Exact test (p=.013) and the Strasser-Weber Independence test (p=.008). Significant cell deviations from the null distribution are derived from adjusted Pearson residuals. Cells that deviate more than 1.96 standard deviations from the expected cell value are considered significant. *p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001

understand the macro-perspective on UBI. But I don't yet see the difference with social assistance"[137]. Democrat elites play a largely passive role in the debate, being mostly active as political promotors (33 per cent).

In sum, the political alignments seem to be mostly similar to previous episodes of discussion (Groot & Van der Veen 2000). The green left is still overrepresented amongst proponents (see also Perkiö 2020), while liberals and conservatives are opposed, and the socialist party remains divided on the issue (e.g. Vanderbrought 2006; Schwander & Vlandas 2020). The UBI debate develops primarily by changing frames while the political coalitions endorsing these frames remain stable (see also Steensland 2008).

5 • CONCLUSION: THE STRUGGLE OVER INTERPRETATION

In this work I explored the struggle over interpretation surrounding UBI proposals by analyzing a policy debate on Dutch Twitter. Using discourse network analysis (Leifeld 2017), I identified the substantive positions towards UBI displayed by a Twitter audience, described the centrality of arguments in the debate, and investigated which political elites endorse these positions. The analysis points to several key findings. First, the well-known schism between the liberal and egalitarian interpretations of UBI – constituting its 'many faces' (De Wispelaere 2016; De Wispelaere & Stirton 2004) – is driven primarily by ambivalence towards its redistributive implications amongst opponents as well as proponents. Moreover, I observe a turn towards social investment frames amongst UBI advocates (see also Perkiö 2020), who argue centrally that UBI activates the unemployed and removes work disincentives from existing social security systems. This change in framing, however, seems to have little visible impact on elite coalition formation. Green-left elites remain overrepresented amongst proponents, while liberals and conservatives are opposed, and the socialist party remains divided on the issue.

These findings confirm that, at least in the Dutch case, presenting UBI as 'beyond left and right' divides the political left without generating support from liberal conservatives. Substantively, proponents on Twitter make a truly cross-partisan case for UBI policy, as is also the case in much scholarly work (e.g. Reed & Lansley 2016; see also Barry 1996:3; Torry 2016:168; Purdy 2013:483). However, this position has not led liberal or conservative elites to openly support the UBI proposal, at least on Twitter. Inversely, however, framing UBI as 'beyond left and right' elicits suspicion amongst socialist elites, who fear that UBI would amount to welfare retrenchment (De Wispelaere 2016; De Wispelaere & Stirton 2004). Furthermore, and perhaps more importantly, the ambivalence towards the redistributive implications of UBI policy also generates doubts amongst proponent audiences. The lack of clarity regarding the redistributive implications of UBI policy thus fuels the cross-partisan opposition and undermines the

unity of the proponent coalition. In an age of "permanent austerity" (Pierson 2002), the redistributive justice of UBI policy is a policy aspect that cannot be ignored.

The social investment turn in UBI discourse also provides suggestions on why the policy proposal has led to experiments with unconditional social assistance in the Netherlands and other Western countries (Perkiö 2020; Van der Veen 2019). On the surface, the UBI debate on Dutch Twitter seems to be a shock to welfare state discourse in the Netherlands: it challenges the foundation of the welfare state by proposing to provide 'welfare without work'. These ideas are core to the postproductivist ideals found in the works of e.g. Offe & Van Parijs (2013) and Gortz (1997) and many others. That such a radical proposal commands attention in the Netherlands speaks to the work of Goodin (2001), who identified the Netherlands as the most post-productivistic country in Europe. In practice, however, the core of the UBI debate on Dutch Twitter is very much in line with the established welfare discourse: to ensure employment and manage the increasingly costly welfare system. The higher-educated and left-leaning Twitter audience seems to have played a role in bringing the social investment frames to the foreground. Municipal politics leveraged the momentum surrounding UBI to experiment with positive incentives and trust towards welfare recipients (Groot Muffels & Verlaat 2019, Roosma 2022). As the discussion on UBI evolves, it seems that the policy proposal manages to reach political agendas by downplaying its more radical elements. When viewing UBI as a social investment policy – perhaps best labelled as the 'middle road' (see Jordan 2013) – it makes sense that popular support for UBI policy is unrelated to automation risk (Busemeyer & Sahm 2021) and that the policy gained media attention despite public preferences for targeted and conditional variants (e.g. Stadelmann-Steffen & Dermont 2020: Rincón, Vlandas & Hiilamo 2022).

The use of Twitter for analysing a policy debate also comes with its limitations. First, the debate under observation cannot be taken as representative of the overall political debate. The arguments coalitions that emerge are to some extent altered by the users involved and the

dynamics of the platform. Twitter users are not representative of the general population (e.g. Barberá & Rivero 2015), with the political left being somewhat overrepresented on Dutch Twitter (Wieringa et al. 2018) and those engaging in political debates are more likely to be male and higher educated (van Klingeren, Trilling & Möller 2021). Moreover, social media have distinct logics (Van Dijck & Poell 2013) that influence the formation of discursive coalitions. Twitter debate is influenced by algorithms, influencers and audience amplification dynamics (Zhang et al. 2018) that foreground some arguments over others. The identified discursive coalition should therefore be seen as at least partly particular to Twitter, meaning that the coalition formation may differ in e.g. parliamentary debates or newspaper discussions.

The UBI debate on Dutch Twitter also invites reflection on the phenomenon and role of online policy debates. This study shows considerable and complex online public engagement with UBI policy, which seemingly encouraged policymakers to pursue experiments with unconditional welfare (see also Groot, Muffels & Verlaat 2019). This involvement of online audiences in policy processes is not unique. An increasing number of case studies shows that online publics incidentally mobilize to advocate a range of policy agendas, be it internet regulations (Schünemann, Steiger & Stier 2015; Benkler et al. 2015), education policy (Supovitz, Daly & Del Fresno 2018; Schuster, Jörgens & Kolleck 2021), climate change (Schünemann 2020) or health policy (e.g. Bridge, Flint & Tench 2021) among others. As most of these studies imply some effect on the policy process, this phenomenon has strong potential implications for deliberative theory (e.g. Shirky 2008; cf. Hindman 2008) and the policy process (e.g. Zahariadis 2019; Sabatier & Weible 2019). Our understanding of the popular influence on public policy would greatly benefit from bringing together the study of online policy debates in a single conceptual framework – especially regarding online protests (e.g. Barberá et al. 2015), online amplification and agenda setting dynamics (e.g. Zhang et al. 2018; Russel Neuman et al. 2014) and the structure of online networks (Himelboim, McCreery & Smith 2013). I see an opportunity to apply these strands of literature to the study of online policy debates, helping us to

elaborate on how online policy debates shape public policy formation. A systematic review of the study of online policy debates integrates and complements existing case studies, and may eventually elucidate and consolidate channels for stronger democratic participation in the policy process.

Lastly, while this study has focussed on public debate, there is much to be learned on how this debate affects popular support. Framing studies have described the arguments and coalitions in the media (Perkiö, Rincón & van Draanen 2019, Carroll & Engel 2021) and studies on popular support have been focussed on the influence of institutionalized values and interests (e.g. Stadelman-Steffen & Dermont 2020; Roosma & Van Oorschot 2020). The few existing studies on framing effects have focussed on direct effects, showing in particular that arguments against UBI – concerning immigration, work incentives and affordability – tend to erode support while arguments in favour do not build support (Bay & Petersen 2006; Jordan, Ferguson & Haglin 2022). A realistic framing study on how the struggle over interpretation in public debate affects opinion formation is still missing. I turn to this task in the following chapter.

5 Constructing Constituencies?

How the "Struggle Over Interpretation" Affects the Structure of Popular Support for Universal Basic Income

ABSTRACT

While Universal Basic Income (UBI) policy proposals aroused the interest of opinion leaders and policymakers, the public acceptance of such reforms hinges on the "struggle over interpretation" in the public debate. In this chapter I investigate to what extent constituencies are influenced by the frame competition within and between political factions. I show that competing frames generally do not polarize public support, but instead erode support for UBI across the political left and right. Interestingly, however, exposure to the leftist divide depolarizes support, decreasing support on the left while increasing support on the right. Moreover, while support is more polarized amongst the more knowledgeable, prior knowledge does not alter the susceptibility to frames. More broadly, I argue that support for the UBI proposal may be overestimated by public opinion surveys, but public opinion is stable to the extent that it is unlikely that media frames can invert support amongst political constituencies.

1 • INTRODUCTION

Universal Basic Income (UBI) is a radical proposal to reform welfare

This chapter is a slightly adapted version of a manuscript currently under review in an international academic journal

states by providing benefits without targets and activation requirements. As discussed throughout this dissertation, interest in such policy has peaked in recent years, attracting media attention in various countries (e.g. Perkiö, Rincón & van Draanen 2019). Activists in Switzerland brought UBI to a vote in a binding referendum and set up petitions to bring the proposal to a vote (Liu 2020). The UBI proposal was featured as a flagship proposal in several political campaigns, most notably in the United States presidential primaries (Yang 2018), and among the elected populist parties in Spain and Italy (Bickerton & Accetti 2018:134; cf. De Wispelaere 2016:133). Policy experiments with unconditional social assistance popped up across Europe (Bollain et al. 2019), including in Finland, the Netherlands, Spain, Scotland, and the United States. Even the international policy organization OECD expressed its interest in a policy brief (Browne & Immervoll 2017).

The revival of the UBI debate has sparked a new wave of scholarship, interested in the political feasibility of UBI policy (e.g. De Wispeleare 2016). A particular interest in this field regards the "psychological feasibility" of UBI policy, which "concerns the legitimation of a policy through securing a broad level of social acceptance amongst the general public" (De Wispeleare & Noguera 2012:27). The moral and pragmatic objections associated with unconditional and universal policies have been recognized by many scholars. Especially the provision of unconditional benefits to those deemed undeserving of social support has been found to "invoke extremely strong gut feelings for the opposition" (Groot & Van der Veen 2000:216) and repeatedly raises "deep-seated anxieties about the cost (...) and likely impact on work incentives" (Sloman 2018:639). In response, scholars of welfare legitimacy have investigated whether different policy designs can circumvent these moral and pragmatic concerns (Stadelman-Steffen & Dermont 2020; Chrisp, Pulkka & Rincón 2020; Rincón, Vlandas & Hiilamo 2022; Laenen, van Hootegem & Rossetti 2022), generally finding – somewhat ironically – that popular support for UBI policy would be bolstered by introducing targets and activation requirements.

While these studies aim to represent the unbiased opinion of the general public, they assume that the general public has a strong and

stable opinion of the UBI proposal. Recent studies, however, have expressed "doubts whether respondents fully understand the impact of introducing a BI" (Roosma & Van Oorschot 2020:203) and that "respondents did not show well-developed attitudes towards a UBI" (Rossetti et al. 2020:288). An underinformed public seems to be easily persuaded to change position, for example when confronted with deservingness cues and affordability concerns (Bay & Petersen 2006; Jordan, Ferguson & Haglin 2022). Accordingly, several studies have suggested that the popular legitimacy of UBI policy hinges on its "struggle over interpretation" in media and politics (Perkiö 2020a; Perkiö, Rincón & van Draanen 2019; Caroll & Engel 2021; Roosma 2022), meaning that support for UBI depends strongly on the frames that compete in popular and political discourse. The literature thus points out that the opinion-formation process surrounding UBI is very much ongoing, implying that framing and persuasion efforts from political elites and opinion makers are pivotal in constructing the perceptions and attitudes towards UBI policy. My contribution to the study of UBI support is therefore to investigate to what extent support for UBI can be constructed through framing efforts.

Moreover, framing studies can also further our understanding of *how* support for or against UBI policy is built in public debate. The study of persuasion effects (e.g. Sniderman & Thierault 2004) bridges the conceptual gap between media framing studies in Chapters 3 and 4 (see also Perkiö, Rincón & van Draanen 2019; Caroll & Engel 2021) and studies on the popular legitimacy of UBI in Chapter 2 (see also e.g. Chrisp, Pulkka & Rincón 2020). The few existing studies have so far been focussed on direct effects, showing in particular that arguments against UBI – concerning immigration, work incentives and affordability – tend to erode support while arguments in favour do not build support (Bay & Petersen 2006; Jordan, Ferguson & Haglin 2022). In a review of opinion surveys, Perkiö, Rincón and van Draanen (2019:238-40) suggest that framing UBI as "free money" and "additional" to existing benefits lowers support while framing UBI as enabling "unpaid work" and promoting "job security" increases support. In terms of political constituencies, especially conservative

voters – who are broadly considered opponents of the UBI proposal – react strongly to counterarguments while being insensitive even to conservative arguments in favour (Jordan, Ferguson & Haglin 2022; Yeung 2022).

This study contributes here by investigating how competing frames influence the political polarization of UBI support. In actual discourse, support is shaped by competing frames that endorse and discredit policy proposals, which influence their persuasiveness (e.g. Druckman 2022:77; Sniderman & Theriault 2004:145). The exact influence of such competitive persuasion on public opinion is essential to understand how the ongoing public debate influences voter positions on the UBI proposal and by extension the political feasibility of UBI policy. However, even in the still relatively scarce study of competing frames (see e.g. Amsalem & Zoizner 2022) frames often align with pre-existing cross-partisan divides, leaving even less attention for the internal political division and cross-partisan support observed in the UBI debate (cf. Mullinix 2015). Within this context, in line with the fourth research question of this dissertation, I investigate:

How do competing frames influence the political polarization in support for UBI policy?

Moreover, I study the role of prior knowledge of the UBI proposal in the framing effects on voters. While prior studies are concerned about an underinformed public (Roosma & Van Oorschot 2020:203; Rossetti et al. 2020:288), framing studies generally suggest that voters without prior knowledge of policy issues are more easily persuaded (Chong & Druckman 2007a:111; Druckman & McGrath 2019, cf. Druckman & Nelson 2003). Incorporating prior knowledge of UBI tells us to what extent media frames have already produced crystallized attitudes towards UBI. Moreover, it demonstrates to what extent the limited persuasive influence of frames (Jordan, Ferguson & Haglin 2022; Yeung 2022) can be attributed to the (lack of) prior attitude formation. I thus also investigate

To what extent does prior knowledge of the UBI proposal limit or facilitate the persuasiveness of frames?

In the following sections, I elaborate on the background of the interpretative struggle surrounding UBI policy and present a distilled overview of arguments centred around the pro-left and pro-right interpretations. Next, I derive expectations from theories of motivated reasoning on how constituencies respond to competing frames. After presenting the data and methods I move to a discussion and conclusion.

2 • THE STRUGGLE OVER INTERPRETATION

Throughout its history, UBI policy has been advocated by those on the very left as well as those on the very right. While some authors have taken this broad advocacy as evidence for the possibility to unite the left and right behind a single welfare proposal (e.g. Reed & Lansley 2016), more in-depth accounts of these debates point out that advocates on the left and right have very different proposals in mind (e.g. Chrisp & Martinelli 2019; De Wispelaere & Stirton 2004). The "struggle over interpretation" (Perkiö 2012; Roosma 2022) is the process of framing UBI in political and media debates as left or right – or "beyond left and right" (Reed & Lansley 2016). On opposite extremes, two interpretations of UBI policy compete: one of "real" freedom affiliated with the political ideologies of the pro-left (Van Parijs 1991) and another of deregulation in line with the ideologies of libertarian right (Friedman 2013 [1968]).

In the more radical debates, UBI is presented as the means to free ourselves from the necessity of paid labour (Perkiö, Rincón & van Draanen 2019; Sloman 2018; see also Chapter 3), in particular by automating jobs and redistributing the profits in the form of an unconditional and universal benefit (see Yang 2018; Bregman 2016; Stern 2016). The automation narrative builds on the classical liberal-egalitarian perspective on UBI, which argues that the economic independence afforded by UBI (Van Parijs 1991) would steer society away from its focus on paid employment and infinite economic growth as the basis for social

welfare (Offe & Van Parijs 2013; Gorz 1999). The opposition can be found in the pro-labour position, where unconditional social assistance is argued to invite welfare dependency, which is considered an unfair tax burden to those working longer hours (e.g. White 2006). Indeed, providing unconditional benefits to those undeserving of support has been found to "invoke extremely strong gut feelings for the opposition" (Groot & Van der Veen 2000:216) and repeatedly raises "deep-seated anxieties about the cost (...) and likely impact on work incentives" (Sloman 2018:639).

In contrast, the pro-right interpretation of UBI policy aims to manage the increasing costs of the welfare system by replacing the welfare bureaucracy with a single universal benefit. Disciplinary forms of activation are not only considered ineffective but also costly to implement and administrate. Milton Friedman (2013 [1968]:111-20) argued decades ago that a negative income tax would remove work disincentives and reduce animosity towards welfare administrators. In addition to removing conditionalities from social assistance provision, UBI proponents have frequently argued that the benefit can be funded in part by replacing many targeted welfare programs (Van Parijs 2018). On the opposing side, studies find especially socialists arguing that the replacement of targeted welfare programs would lead to lower net benefits for the most vulnerable in society (e.g. Vanderbrogt 2006; see also Chapter 3). Amongst these opponents, UBI is considered to be a form of welfare retrenchment in disguise, by replacing targeted welfare programs with a universal benefit insufficient to cover the special needs of vulnerable groups.

These two narratives are at the core of the struggle over interpretation. While proponents from different factions in the debate agree on the abstract notion of a universal and unconditional benefit, disagreement on policy details reveals a "persistent political division" in their endorsement (De Wispelaere 2016:135). Concrete proposals differ particularly in the desired level of the benefit, the extent of replacing existing benefits and the funding mechanisms, producing radically different outcomes depending on how these parameters are set. As a consequence, proponents in the media frame UBI as "beyond left

TABLE 5.1 Arguments illustrating how UBI policy both clashes with and divides political ideologies

	Leftist Arguments	Rightist Arguments
Proponent	Less stress and **more freedom** to choose how to live your life (Freedom)	A **less expensive** welfare state (Deregulation)
Opponent	**Lower benefits** for the vulnerable in society (Retrenchment)	**More dependence** on welfare, at the cost of the taxpayer (Dependence)

and right", while opponents from across the political spectrum frame the proposal as either a form of leftist redistribution without responsibility or rightist retrenchment that abandons the weakest in society (see Chapter 4). The simultaneous circulation of these two interpretations, therefore, creates both uncertainty and opportunity to frame the proposal in logically contradictory ways.

To further illustrate this point, I present a simplified overview of the debate surrounding these two dominant interpretations in Figure 5.1. Arguments in the columns consistently argue in favour and against the pro-leftist interpretation (freedom versus dependence) or the pro-right interpretation (deregulation versus need). Arguments in the diagonals disagree in their interpretation of the policy proposal, providing either divisive arguments from the left (freedom versus need) or right (deregulation versus dependence).

3 • PERSUADING CONSTITUENCIES

Looking at the structure of public opinion on UBI, it is clear that the policy particularly appeals to those on the political left (e.g. Roosma & Van Oorschot 2020; Vlandas 2021; Chrisp, Pulkka & Rincón 2020). Schwander and Vlandas (2020) find that the policy is supported primarily by those who want greater economic redistribution – what they term the "labourist" left – rather than by proponents of freedom or

social investment. In a further nuance of this account, I have demonstrated in Chapter 2 that particularly the unconditional and redistributive dimensions of UBI appeal to the (progressive) left electorate, while its universalism is more appealing to liberal voters. Moreover, I have shown in Chapter 4 that mainly green and progressive political elites endorse the policy proposal in their political communication (see also Perkiö 2020b). Thus, under minimal framing conditions, I expect that those identifying with the political left are more supportive of UBI policy than those on the right.

Still, the exposure to the frame competition in the media may alter the structure of support. Media frames influence the interpretation of an issue, by guiding the audience's attention to particular aspects of an object (Entman 1991; Chong & Druckman 2007a). In turn, such a shift in issue interpretation may persuade audiences to favour or oppose issues by altering or reinforcing a particular interpretation of an issue (e.g. Scheufele & Tewksbury 2007). Frames are usually considered to be persuasive when they resonate with their receivers' prior beliefs (e.g. Snow et al. 2014). Moreover, to maintain a consistent belief system, people rely on mental shortcuts such as cues on the identity and credibility of the sender in addition to political values and interests invoked by the frame (e.g. Kunda 1990; Slothuus & de Vreese 2010; Druckman & McGrath 2019). Constituencies thus should support UBI when the proposal is consistently framed to suit their values and interests, and greater opposition when framed as opposing their values and interests.

As in most real policy discussions, however, the process of framing and persuasion is complicated by the competition between frames. The literature seems divided on the consequences of competing frames: some argue competition creates ambivalence (e.g. Sniderman & Theriault 2004:146-7; Chong & Druckman 2007b:651) others argue it polarizes opinions (Mullinix 2015; Taber & Lodge 2006). These accounts recognize that the public holds distinct and sometimes conflicting opinions towards different policy aspects (e.g. Meffert, Guge & Lodge 2004; Feldman & Zaller 1992), as has also been demonstrated in the case of UBI in Chapter 2. They differ however in the assumed

type of reasoning triggered by competing frames. The ambivalence hypothesis holds that exposure to competing frames – when equally convincing – motivates the audience to critically evaluate their accuracy, leading to more nuanced opinions. The polarization hypothesis contends competing frames induce directionally motivated reasoning, where the audience chooses to focus on the argument that accords with their prior values while dismissing the incongruent information (but see Druckman & Mcgrath 2019:114).

Instead of juxtaposing these hypotheses directly, I propose that the type of response depends on the type of frame exposure. Druckman (2022) as well as Amsalem and Zoizner (2022) identify substantial variation in effect size between competing frame studies, opening the possibility of argumentative situations determining which kind of response is induced. The overview in Figure 5.1 distinguishes two types of competing frames: the **clash** between political ideologies and the **division** within political ideologies. I will argue that the pro-left clash – economic freedom versus welfare dependence – polarizes support. Inversely, the pro-right clash – deregulation versus retrenchment – should depolarize support. On the other hand, I propose that divisions within political ideologies erode support amongst their constituencies. The leftist division – economic freedom versus retrenchment – erodes support on the left and the rightist division – deregulation versus welfare dependence – erodes support on the right.

Our first hypothesis concerns the public response to the pro-left clash, i.e. framing UBI as a matter of economic freedom versus welfare dependence. Because the political left is already more supportive of UBI policy (e.g. Roosma & Van Oorschot 2020; Vlandas 2021; Chrisp Pulkka & Rincón 2020), the framing of UBI as pro-left broadly aligns with respondents' political values. Taber and Lodge (2006:756) argue that frames aligning with entrenched political values invoke an emotional response that leads respondents to seek confirmation of their beliefs while discounting arguments that oppose their views. Consequently, the pro-left framing of the UBI proposal should reinforce the prior attitudes of leftist and rightist audiences, and thereby increase the polarization in support.

H1: The pro-left clash *increases* political polarization in support for UBI policy

Second, the UBI debate features pro-right arguments that are designed to appeal to the political right and trigger a backlash from the political left (e.g. De Wispelaere et al. 2016). Much like the pro-left framing, the pro-right framing exposes the audience to a clash between political ideologies, here as deregulation versus retrenchment. The key difference here is a mismatch – instead of alignment – between how the policy is presented and how the policy is already perceived. The pro-right framing of UBI presents the proposal in line with rightist political values and opposing leftist political values. However, because the political right constituency generally opposes the UBI proposal, this framing seeks to persuade them to change their stance on the issue and similarly challenges the position of the leftist constituency. The literature on competing frames provides no clear expectations in the case of such a mismatch between frames and prior attitudes. If these frames are persuasive, it seems reasonable to expect that the pro-right clash depolarizes support, by simultaneously reducing opposition on the right and eroding support on the left.

H2: The pro-right clash *reduces* political polarization in support for UBI policy

As illustrated in Chapter 4, the UBI debate is further characterized by divisions within political factions, especially on the left (see also Schwander & Vlandas 2020; Vanderborght 2006, for an overview see Van Parijs 2018). Exposure to the frame competition resulting from such internal division should erode support amongst constituencies of the divided political camp. I propose that the motivation to critically evaluate competing arguments (e.g. Chong & Druckman 2007b:651; Druckman & McGrath 2019) is especially strong when exposed to internal division. Especially in such cases, the negativity bias comes into play: frames emphasizing costs or loss have stronger effects on attitudes than frames emphasizing savings or gains (Bizer & Petty 2005;

Cobb & Kuklinski 1997:91). This bias towards negative arguments has been established in framing activation policy (Kootstra & Roosma 2018) and UBI policy (Jordan, Ferguson & Haglin 2022). Thus, when exposed to internal competition, I expect the negative argument to be decisive. Exposure to the rightist division – deregulation versus welfare dependence – should further undermine support on the right, while exposure to the leftist division – freedom versus retrenchment – should undermine support on the left.

> H3: The rightist division (further) undermines support for UBI policy amongst the rightist constituency
>
> H4: The leftist division undermines support for UBI policy amongst the leftist constituency

4 • THE ROLE OF PRIOR KNOWLEDGE

Several studies find that the more knowledgeable – one could say society's elites – are more polarized in their political attitudes. Theories of attitudinal constraint (Converse 2006 [1964]) and ambivalence (Feldman & Zaller 1992) view knowledge as a form of political sophistication, arguing that the attitudes of the general public are less aligned with political ideologies compared to political elites. Similarly, those with more knowledge of science are more polarized in their support for government policies (Drummond & Fischhoff 2017; see also Gauchat 2012). The higher educated and more knowledgeable are viewed as better at directed motivated reasoning (see also Kunda 1990). I therefore expect that:

> H5: Polarization in support for UBI is greater amongst the more knowledgeable.

Moreover, in line with prior research, I expect the knowledgeable to be less persuaded by frames. Framing theories generally suppose that stronger – i.e. more certain and more accessible – attitudes are more

difficult to change (e.g. Druckman & McGrath 2019). Issue knowledge is an early-stage indicator of strong attitudes: those interested in the issue seek information to become more certain of their position (Howe and Krosnick 2017:331). This implies in turn that the uninformed public will be more susceptible to framing (but see Arceneaux & Vander Wielen 2017:98-105; Druckman & Nelson 2003).

Applying this mechanism to the persuasion of constituencies, the responses to competing frames elaborated above should be stronger for the uninformed public (e.g. Sniderman & Thierault 2004:146; Hansen 2007). Compared to the control condition, the uninformed public should be more supportive when exposed to the frames that appeal to their political values – either the pro-left or pro-right frames – and more ambivalent when exposed to the frames that contain contradictory information – i.e. the divided left and right frames. In both scenarios, I expect the constituencies with more uncertain prior attitudes to be more susceptible to the frames.

> H6: Constituencies that have less prior knowledge about UBI are more responsive to frames

5 • DATA AND METHODS

Data

We collected data using the FlyCatcher panel, which is designed to represent a demographically balanced set of Dutch respondents. The comparison with population data from Statistics Netherlands in Appendix A5 shows that the sample is representative of the Dutch population, with deviations from population statistics around or below five per cent. Of all panel members that were invited to fill out the questionnaire, 65.2 per cent completed the questionnaire. The sample contains N=1303 respondents.

Vignette experiment

To test my expectations I designed a persuasion (vignette) experiment.

Respondents are first confronted with a more or less neutral definition of the UBI proposal. This definition is one agreed upon by most scholars (e.g. Widerquist et al. 2013) and resembles the survey question included in the 8th wave of the European Social Survey (2016):

> Some circles have recently debated the implementation of a universal and unconditional basic income, a proposal to reform the welfare state. We will further explain the basic income proposal. The proposal entails the following:
>
> - The government pays everyone a monthly income to cover essential living costs.
> - It replaces a part of the existing 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.

Respondents are then either assigned to the control condition or confronted with two arguments, one in favour and one against the proposal. The proponent argument frames UBI in terms of *freedom* or *deregulation*, while the opponent argument invokes either the *need* or *dependence* of welfare recipients. The exact phrasing is as follows:

> There are several reasons to be in favour or against a basic income.
>
> Some say that the basic income leads to [less stress and **more freedom** to choose how to live your life / a **less expensive** system of welfare benefits]
>
> Others say that the basic income leads to [**lower benefits** for the most vulnerable in society / **more dependence** on welfare, at the cost of the taxpayer]

The order of the first and second arguments is also randomized: some respondents will first read an argument in favour and other will first read an argument against UBI. This is to avoid persuasive effects being influenced by the order in which the arguments are presented. The vignette thus has a 2*2*2 design with eight unique vignettes and a separate control condition with minimal framing. After reading the explanation and arguments, respondents are asked about their support for UBI policy on a five-point scale ranging from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree': "are you generally against or in favour of having this scheme in the Netherlands?".

These arguments combine to make four sets of competing frames: pro-left frame, pro-right, divided-left and divided-right. I compare the persuasive effects of these competing frames with the control group. In the pro-left condition, UBI is consistently framed as a leftist policy proposal by arguing to bring more freedom versus more welfare dependence. In the pro-right condition, UBI is presented as a rightist proposal, where the argument to reduce bureaucracy is countered by the dangers of retrenching benefits. The divided-left condition shows two contradictory leftist arguments that point to opposing interpretations of UBI: more freedom and lower benefits. Finally, the divided-right condition shows two contrasting views from the right, namely less bureaucracy but also more welfare dependence. The experiment is designed so that each frame condition is presented to the same fraction of respondents.

The descriptive statistics of the variables of interest are presented in Table 5.1. It is noteworthy that a relatively high proportion of respondents (51.7%) report having heard of the UBI proposal and knowing what the proposal entails. On the surface, this contradicts the idea that the population lacks knowledge about UBI (Roosma & Van Oorschot 2020:203; Rossetti et al. 2020:288). It speaks, on the other hand, to the influence that the UBI debate has had in the Netherlands (see Chapter 3, see also Groot & Van der Veen 2000). It seems the public is becoming increasingly informed about the UBI proposal.

TABLE 5.2 Descriptive statistics

		Min.	Max.	m | %	s
Political left-right placement (LR)		0	10	5.01	2.116
UBI support		1	5	3.14	1.083
UBI knowledge	Much			51.7	
	Some			38.8	
	None			9.6	

6 • RESULTS

I performed an ordinary least squares (OLS) linear regression analysis to test my hypotheses. The results are presented in Table 5.2. I first discuss the polarization in support and the persuasive effects of the frames before moving to the influence of prior knowledge.

The first model confirms that those identifying with the political left tend to be more supportive of UBI policy (b=-.131, p<.001). On the far left UBI support averages around 3.8 points (close to agreeing), while on the far right support averages around 2.5 points (between disagree and neutral). Despite the divisions among leftist elites (e.g. Van Parijs 2018), UBI policy is appealing to the leftist constituency (e.g. Roosma & Van Oorschot 2020; Vlandas 2020; Chrisp Pulkka & Rincón 2020).

Persuading constituencies

Before moving to the hypotheses, note that the exposure to competing frames generally erodes support for UBI. Model 2 shows that exposure to pro-left, pro-right and divided-right frames significantly decreases overall support compared to the control condition. This general erosion of support in response to competing frames can be attributed to the greater strength of negative arguments (e.g. Bizer & Petty 2005) that has also been observed in the case of UBI (Jordan, Ferguson & Haglin 2022; Yeung 2022). These results suggest that com-

TABLE 5.3 OLS regression of competing frames and prior knowledge on support for UBI policy

	(1)		(2)		(3)		(4)		(5)	
Intercept	3.801	***	3.955	***	4.049	***	3.981	***	4.173	***
Political left-right placement (LR)	-0.131	***	-0.133	***	-0.128	***	-0.115	***	-0.156	***
Frames										
Control			ref.		ref.		ref.		ref.	
Pro-Left			-0.295	***	-0.314	***	0.036		0.03	
Pro-Right			-0.204	*	-0.21	*	-0.177		-0.173	
Divided Left			0.047		0.04		-0.398		-0.396	
Divided Right			-0.273	***	-0.284	**	0.119		0.095	
UBI knowledge										
Much					ref.		ref.		ref.	
Some					-0.193	**	-0.189	**	-0.721	***
None					-0.362	***	-0.355	***		
Interactions										
LR*Control							ref.			
LR*Pro-Left							-0.059			
LR*Pro-Right							-0.005			
LR*Divided Left							0.073	+		
LR*Divided Right							-0.066			
LR*Much Knowledge									ref.	
LR*Some Knowledge									0.089	**
LR*No Knowledge									0.097	*
R^2	0.066	***	0.083	***	0.096	***	0.105	***	0.103	***
ΔR^2	0.066	***	0.017	***	0.013	***	0.009	**	0.008	**

Note: ***p<.001; **p<.01; *p<.05; +p<.10

peting frames trigger accuracy-motivated reasoning (e.g. Feldman & Zaller 1992; Chong & Druckman 2007:651), which lowers the overall level of support due to the greater strength of negative arguments (e.g. Bizer & Petty 2005).

However, I find no strong evidence to support the hypotheses on the polarizing and depolarizing effects of frames. Model 4 in Table 5.2 shows that, compared to the control group, exposure to the various competing frames does not significantly alter the level of political polarization in support for UBI. Even though the differences between slopes are significant overall ($\Delta R^2 = .009$, $p<.01$), most slopes do not differ significantly from the control condition. The pro-left clash (hy-

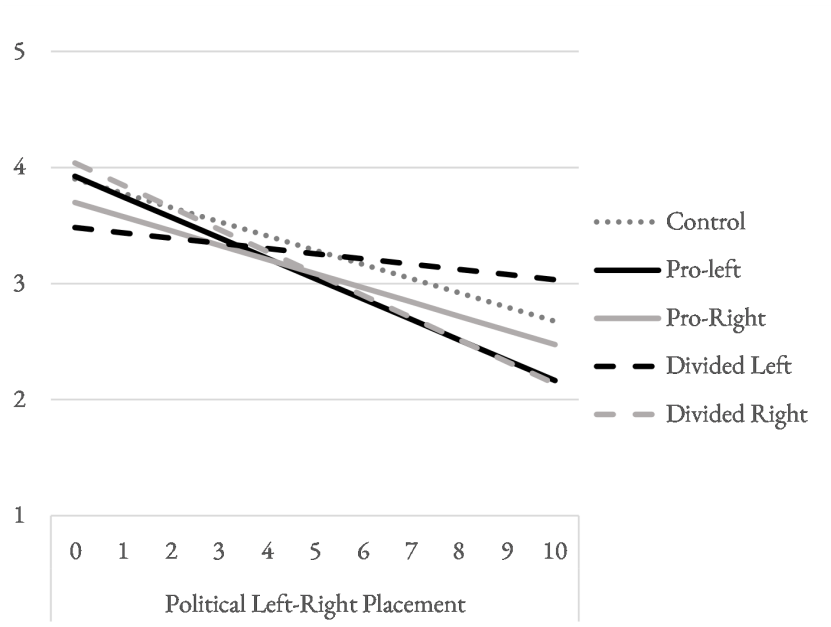
pothesis 1) does polarize support in the sample but the effect is not statistically significant from the control condition (b=-.059, p=.183). The polarizing effect of the pro-right clash [H2] is negligible even in the sample (b=-.005, p=.905). The rightist division further undermines support in the sample, as expected in the third hypothesis, but again the effect does not differ from the control condition (b=-.066, p=.109). In contrast to predictions derived from theories of directed motivated reasoning (e.g. Mullinix 2015; Taber & Lodge 2006), at least in the case of UBI policy, constituencies are generally not reinforced in their prior attitudes when confronted with opposing views.

Competing frames from a divided political left (hypothesis 4) form a tentative exception to this conclusion. Depolarization does seem to occur in response to the leftist divide: even though the difference with the control condition is only marginally significant (b=.073, p<.10), additional contrasts show support is significantly less polarized amongst those exposed to the divided-left frames compared to the pro-left frames (b=.131, p<.01) and divided-right frames (b=-.145, p<.001). Figure 5.2 illustrates this depolarization more clearly, showing that the divided-left frame simultaneously lowers support amongst the political left while increasing support amongst the political right. Interestingly these findings suggest that the division within the political left contributes to establishing a cross-partisan coalition that is "beyond left and right" (e.g. Reed & Lansley 2016) when expressed in public debate.

The role of knowledge

Before discussing the hypotheses, note that there is a direct relation between prior knowledge and support for UBI. Model 3 in Table 5.2 shows that those with much prior knowledge of UBI – i.e. those who have heard of UBI and know what it entails – tend to be more supportive of UBI policy than those with limited or no prior knowledge. Perhaps unsurprisingly, it appears that those taking an interest in UBI policy are more likely to be proponents than opponents: those with no knowledge of UBI have a significantly lower mean level of support (b=-.355, p<.001).

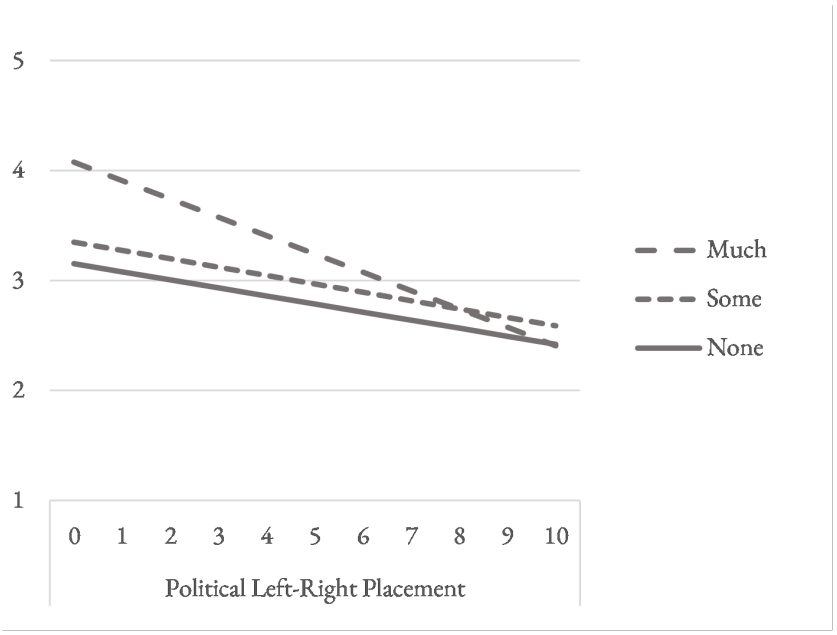
FIGURE 5.1 The influence of competing frames on political polarization of UBI support (estimated simple slopes)



Note: Confidence intervals are omitted for interpretability. Framing effects do not influence political polarization significantly compared to the control condition (see also Table 5.2). However, exposure to the divided left frames is significantly less polarizing compared to the pro-left frame (b=.131, p<.01) and divided-right frame (b=-.145, p<.001).

Moving to the knowledge hypotheses, the results confirm indeed that those with more knowledge of UBI are more polarized in their support for the proposal (see hypothesis 5). Model 5 in Table 5.2 shows that the interaction is significant (ΔR^2=.008, p<.01). The visualisation of this effect is presented in Figure 5.3: the knowledgeable on the political left are much more likely to support UBI compared to the knowledgeable on the political right. Inversely, support is significantly less polarized among those with some prior knowledge (b=.089, p<.01)

FIGURE 5.2 The influence of prior knowledge on political polarization of UBI support (estimated simple slopes)



Note: Confidence intervals are ommited for readability. Compared to those with much prior knowledge of UBI, support is significantly less polarized among those with some prior knowledge (b=.089, p<.01) and no prior knowledge (b=.097, p<.05) of UBI (see also Table 5.2).

or no prior knowledge (b=.097, p<.05). This suggests that the UBI issue becomes more politically polarized – reinforcing the left-right divide – as the public learns more about the proposal. Interestingly it is especially the political left that is more supportive when knowledgeable, while the political right is equally opposed regardless of the level of prior knowledge.

Regarding the sixth hypothesis, I find no convincing evidence that prior knowledge makes audiences less susceptible to frame persuasion. The moderating role of prior knowledge – presented in Appendix

B5 for readability – shows competing frames are roughly equally persuasive for the more and less knowledgeable. In contrast to earlier accounts (e.g. Sniderman & Thierault 2004; Hansen 2007), there is no clear tendency for the more knowledgeable constituencies to be more resilient to competing frames, nor a tendency to become even further polarized (e.g. Mullinix 2015; Taber & Lodge 2006). In the sample, at least, the less knowledgeable constituencies do appear to be persuaded by the pro-right frame: where the more knowledgeable are unaffected or even more opposed in response to this frame, support becomes depolarized amongst the less knowledgeable. Inversely, the sample is more polarized in response to the pro-left frames and more neutral in response to the divided-left frames. A visualization of these effects is presented in Appendix C5. Without exceeding the significance threshold, however, there is no reason to perceive these differences as more than sampling fluctuation. Concerning the struggle over interpretation, it seems that the persuasive influence of UBI frames (Jordan, Ferguson & Haglin 2022; Yeung 2022) does not depend on the strength of prior attitudes. Constituencies remain equally malleable or stable even when they claim to be informed about the policy.

In sum, I find that competing arguments tend to erode support regardless of political orientation, except for the leftist division which depolarizes support. Moreover, while support is more polarized amongst the knowledgeable, affecting especially the leftist constituency, prior knowledge does not alter constituencies' susceptibility to frames.

7 • CONCLUSION: SOBER UP

The recent peak of interest in the Universal Basic Income (UBI) proposal was accompanied by a fierce debate where both the interpretation of the UBI proposal and the desirability of UBI were contested in a so-called "struggle over interpretation" discussed in Chapter 4 (see also Roosma 2022; Perkiö 2012). Despite the interest expressed by policymakers, building political coalitions needed to implement such reforms hinges on the capacity to justify the need for UBI to political

constituencies (De Wispelaere 2016; De Wispelaere & Noguera 2012). To address this issue, I examined to what extent the interpretative struggle between proponents and opponents persuades leftist and rightist constituencies.

Based on the literature on motivated reasoning, I expected competing frames to work differently when representing a clash between or a division within political ideologies. However, contrary to my expectations, exposure to the clash between political ideologies does not polarize support (cf. Mullinix 2015; Taber & Lodge 2006) but such a clash instead erodes support regardless of political orientation. This suggests that in the case of UBI, the public is motivated to evaluate arguments accurately rather than in political terms (see Chong & Druckman 2019), implying in turn that the policy issue is not very politically entrenched despite its appeal to the political left. In the absence of political entrenchment, the cognitive bias towards negative arguments – emphasizing cost or loss – forms a discursive advantage to opponents defending the welfare status quo (e.g. Bizer & Petty 2005; Cobb & Kuklinski 1997:91). These findings align with earlier framing studies that stress the support-eroding influence of counterarguments (Jordan, Ferguson & Haglin 2022; Yueng 2022; Bay & Petersen 2006).

As a notable exception, the discursive division amongst leftist elites in the UBI debate does not erode support. I find that exposure to the leftist division depolarizes support for UBI policy, increasing support from right-wing constituencies at the cost of support from the left. Even though the division on the left has been observed and lamented (see Van Parijs 2018), these results suggest that the leftist opposition contributes to the cross-partisan appeal of UBI policy. This is especially stark compared to the general insensitivity to the more pro-right case for UBI. While prior UBI framing studies found that rightist opponents could not be persuaded (Yueng 2022), my findings suggest that the right-wing constituency can be swayed by disagreement on the left. Framing UBI as "beyond left and right" (e.g. Reed & Lansley 2016), on the other hand, is unlikely to build support on the right.

This study also has implications for the broader study of UBI support. Roosma & Van Oorschot (2020) and Rossetti et al. (2020) raised

concerns about an underinformed public, and thereby the possibility that the observed support for UBI is unstable and therefore unreliable. My findings reassuringly suggest that at least the Dutch public is well aware of the UBI proposal by now: only ten per cent of respondents had never heard of the proposal and over half reported knowing what it entails. Still, the UBI debate is particularly well-developed in the Netherlands (see Groot & Van der Veen 2000; Van der Veen 2019), so research in different countries is required before generalizing this level of awareness to other European countries. More importantly, popular support for UBI policy is not so easily constructed in the debate: even though competing frames erode support – regardless of prior knowledge – constituencies remain stable in their direction of support. Thus, while support for the UBI proposal may be overestimated by public opinion surveys, it is unlikely that proponents turn to opponents and vice versa.

6 Conclusion

In this dissertation I set out to investigate how UBI went from a "crackpot idea" (De Wispelaere & Stirton 2004:266) to a legitimate policy alternative. The unexpected revival of the debate in the Netherlands called for a dual study of its legitimation, including both popular support and public debate: whereas popular support enables and constrains the formation of policy coalitions (e.g. Korpi 2006; Brooks & Manza 2006), the legitimacy of the proposal is also constructed in public debate (e.g. Cox 2001; Béland 2016). After summarizing the results of the chapters, I present the main takeaway of this dissertation.

1 • SUMMARY OF RESULTS

The Ambiguities in Popular Support

This dissertation started with a study on the coherence and contradictions in popular support for the UBI proposal. The popular support for social policies is generally understood as indicative of its political feasibility (e.g. Brooks & Manza 2006; see also De Wispelaere & Noguera 2012) since it shows which constituencies would support its implementation. However, because the UBI proposal is niche and vaguely defined (e.g. Chrisp & Martinelli 2019), it has been challenging to measure popular support (e.g. Roosma & Van Oorschot 2020:203). Several studies have pointed out that the reforms proposed by UBI are so extensive that they lead to ambiguities in support due to conflicting moral and rational considerations (e.g. Chrisp Pulkka & Rincón 2020). In an attempt to capture this so-called multidimensionality, scholars have used survey experiments to gauge the popular response to tweaks in the proposed policy design (e.g. Stadelmann-Steffen & Der-

mont 2020; Rincón, Vlandas & Hiilamo 2022; Laenen, van Hootegem & Rossetti 2022). These experiments are innovative, but by design exclude the commonalities in support for policy aspects from consideration. As a result, we still knew little about to what extent UBI is conceived as a coherent proposal, as typically argued by proponents (e.g. Van Parijs 1991), or whether the support is ambiguous and conflicted.

In the second chapter, I presented an alternative approach to multidimensionality that focuses instead on these commonalities. Building on prior work on the multidimensionality of welfare attitudes (e.g. Roosma Gelissen & Van Oorschot 2013) and welfare institutions (e.g. Laenen 2018), I proposed that support for UBI is driven by *welfare controversies*: the moral values and interests related to the welfare state. After deriving several controversies from the welfare support literature, I performed a confirmatory factor analysis to assess the dimensionality of UBI support. The results indicate that UBI support is both *ambiguous and coherent*, confirming that people do not support each aspect to the same extent. Instead, the proposal invokes three related but distinct welfare controversies: universalism – i.e. the question of whether everybody is entitled to the same type and degree of welfare provision, redistribution – regarding the degree of wealth transfer from rich to poor, and unconditionality – the degree of support for strict conditions to enforce the moral obligation to work. The ambiguities are further illustrated by the differences in support between constituencies and key demographics. Universalism is a more liberal issue supported especially by entrepreneurs. Redistribution is an economic issue that unites conservative and leftist voters against liberal and populist constituencies. Inversely, unconditionality is a moral issue that divides the lower-educated liberal-conservative voters and the higher-educated progressive left. Thus, for a broad range of demographics and constituencies, there is both something to like and something to dislike about UBI policy, leaving room for both compromise (e.g. Reed & Lansley 2016) and divisions (e.g. De Wispelaere 2016).

The key finding of this chapter is twofold: there are competing considerations underlying support for the UBI proposal, but simulta-

neously the strong correlation between attitudinal dimensions shows that UBI policy is a reasonably coherent policy in the public mind. Leftist political parties are more supportive of all aspects of UBI, while liberal political parties are more opposed across the board. If these results hold, the survey experiments probing the multidimensionality can be simplified to three dimensions instead of numerous policy parameters. Inversely too, the earlier one-dimensional approach to measuring UBI seems to be more valid than implied by the multidimensional studies. The coherence of popular support suggests that targets, taxes and conditions may indeed be perceived as part of the same parcel. The presentation in the public debate may play a key role in the construction of this perception, a point to which I will turn in the following chapter.

Fundamental Critiques in Public Debate

The third chapter is the first to elaborate on the discursive perspective on legitimacy, by exploring the arguments adopted in the debate on Dutch Twitter. From a framing perspective, the arguments in the Twitter debate may explain why the UBI proposal gained and lost popularity. The debate itself is grounded in established welfare controversies, but can also change the perception of welfare issues (e.g. Béland 2016). Most prominently, the automation narrative (or the lack thereof) is considered the key to its legitimation (Perkiö Rincón & van Draanen 2019:247; Carroll & Engel 2021:432). Moreover, the study also serves to confirm, correct and broaden the scope of survey studies, which typically rely on interests, ideologies and attitudes that are already historically engrained.

In Chapter 3 I find, as expected, that the UBI debate on Dutch Twitter aligns with established welfare controversies to an important extent. Through a content analysis I found 55 unique arguments, which were grouped into four welfare controversies. The most frequently mentioned arguments were related to economic redistribution and welfare conditionality, two central welfare controversies that are also broadly recognized in the study of popular support (e.g. Houtman

1997; see also Chapter 2). Especially opponents framed UBI in terms of redistribution, albeit for different reasons: opponents on the left fear that UBI amounts to retrenchment (e.g. Navarro 2018) while the liberal opponents oppose higher taxation. Proponents seem reluctant to engage with this issue, judging from the relative lack of proponent arguments on redistribution (see also De Wispelaere 2016:136). The issue of welfare conditionality is addressed by both proponents and opponents: proponents view UBI as a liberation from the work obligation (e.g. Van Parijs 1991) and opponents stress that UBI undermines the individual and collective responsibility to work (e.g. White 2006). The UBI debate can thus not be seen as isolated from the central welfare discourse on social rights and obligations.

At the same time, however, despite the suggestion made by studies of popular support (e.g. Roosma & Van Oorschot 2020) the UBI debate is more than a "free lunch", a term coined by Friedman (1975). The discussion features fundamental critiques of the system of social security, providing important clues on the legitimation of UBI. First, the debate features a discussion on automation, which harbours a critique – or perhaps a reimagining – of the work-based system of social security. Proponents argue here that the provision of unconditional social security is inevitable as jobs become increasingly scarce. More fundamentally, the automation narrative questions that work is a necessity, arguably the most dominant idea in welfare politics: a world without work is certainly one of the radical ideas in the UBI debate. This narrative is also found in newspapers of other countries (Perkiö Rincón & van Draanen 2019; Carroll & Engel 2021) and several political figures have used this narrative in their campaigns (e.g. Yang 2018; Stern 2016). Importantly, however, I find that the automation narrative is rather marginal in the discussion on Dutch Twitter, which already suggests that this narrative is not the central driver of UBI's legitimation.

Second, the debate contains next-generation critiques of targeted activation policies in existing social policies – for example regarding the job application requirement and the earnings threshold for benefit eligibility. In their attack on targeted activation policies, these

welfare critiques differ from the older concerns surrounding welfare that accompanied the transition to targeted activation, i.e. the liberal-conservative critiques that welfare depresses economic growth and erodes social solidarity (e.g. Van Oorschot, Reeskens & Meuleman 2012), or the populist critiques of corrupted welfare institutions (De Koster, Achterberg & Van der Waal 2013). Instead, the debate contains two versions of 'new' critiques: the so-called 'poverty trap' argument holds that the low-income thresholds in benefit eligibility discourage people to take part-time or low-paying jobs. The 'trust' argument holds that restrictions and requirements are counterproductive because they foster hostile attitudes towards welfare institutions. These arguments legitimize the UBI proposal as a social investment policy (Hemerijck 2018). The next chapter addresses to what extent these arguments are central to the struggle over interpretation surrounding the UBI proposal.

The Struggle over Interpretation

In Chapter 4 I directed my attention towards the actors behind the frames. Frames are discursive instruments employed by actors, more or less strategically, to legitimize and discredit policy proposals in public debate (e.g. Hajer 2002; Campbell 2002). UBI has been argued to be subject to a struggle over interpretation (e.g. Roosma 2022; Perkiö 2012; see also Chrisp & Martinelli 2019): a variety of arguments and interpretations of the UBI proposal circulate in the debate. This has led some observers to argue that UBI appeals to all major factions in welfare politics (e.g. Reed & Lansley 2016) while others argue that UBI is a proposal with "many faces" (De Wispelaere & Stirton 2004) marked by "persistent political division" (De Wispelaere 2016:135). Unfortunately, the studies available so far have largely ignored the relations between actors and frames, painting the "oddly disembodied picture" of ideas without actors and actors without ideas (Steensland 2008:1030). In response I adopted a network perspective (Leifeld 2017), to find out which discursive coalitions form around UBI and which arguments are most central to the discussion.

The analysis has led me to four key findings. First, the struggle over interpretation revolves mainly around the redistributive implications of UBI. Whereas proponents frame UBI as 'beyond left and right', including both leftist and rightist arguments, opponents frame the proposal as either leftist or rightist. This interpretative struggle is driven mainly by the ambivalence towards the redistributive implications amongst opponents as well as proponents. Opponents on the left frame UBI as a form of welfare retrenchment, while opponents on the right frame UBI as a form of redistribution. Meanwhile, proponents are remarkably silent on the topic of redistribution – perhaps in an attempt to divert attention (De Wispelaere 2016:136) – and even leads to disagreement amongst proponents in the debate. While it is imaginable that the vagueness over the redistributive outcomes helped to attract attention to the proposal, the lack of clarity on this aspect is also a vulnerability.

Second, the analysis points to a turn towards framing UBI in terms of social investment. Paradigmatic arguments such as activation and deregulation are much more central to the discussion compared to radical arguments such as automation and freedom from paid employment. This aligns with earlier findings in the political arena in the Netherlands (Roosma 2022) and Finland (Perkiö 2020). The core of the debate is thus very much in line with the established welfare discourse: activating the unemployed while managing the increasingly costly welfare system. As the discussion on UBI evolves, it seems that the policy proposal manages to reach political agendas by downplaying its more radical elements, perhaps at the cost of transforming the proposal itself (see Fouksman & Klein 2019).

Third, despite this shift in framing, the positions of political elites seem to be largely unchanged. While proponents make a truly cross-partisan case for UBI, the political representatives among them are exclusively socialist and green politicians. Amongst opponents I find both socialist and liberal-conservative politicians, who are united by their lack of faith in the feasibility of UBI and their commitment to the work obligation. Despite attempts to build a coalition that is beyond left and right e.g. Reed & Lansley 2016; see also Barry 1996:3;

Torry 2016:168; Purdy 2013:483), the political coalitions surrounding the UBI proposal have remained quite stable compared to the earlier episode of UBI debate (see Groot & Van der Veen 2000).

Finally, there is some evidence to suggest that 'activist' Twitter audiences contributed to the setup of experiments with unconditional social assistance in the Netherlands (see Groot, Muffels & Verlaat 2019). In response to the Tegenlicht documentaries, a substantial number of people expressed their support for experiments and actively lobbied politicians to start experiments, without engaging in the debate substantively. This engagement certainly increased attention for the proposal through the usual social media dynamics, and arguably legitimized the experiments amongst municipal politicians.

Sober up

Chapter 5 investigates to what extent the interpretative struggle in public debate – discussed in Chapters 3 and 4 – influences popular support for the UBI proposal. The literature points out that the opinion-formation process surrounding UBI is very much ongoing (e.g. Roosma & Van Oorschot 2020:203; Rossetti et al. 2020:288), implying that framing and persuasion efforts from political elites and opinion makers are pivotal in constructing the perceptions and attitudes towards UBI policy. Even though studies of UBI frames are also based on the premise that the debate has "a profound impact on the nature and degree of popular support or opposition to the issue" (Perkiö Rincón & van Draanen 2019:238), the evidence for framing effects and persuasion in the case of UBI is scant. The studies in this area focus mainly on direct effects, broadly finding that counterarguments tend to erode support while arguments in favour do little to build support (Jordan, Ferguson & Haglin 2022; Yeung 2022; Bay & Pedersen 2006). This study addressed a missing piece of the puzzle: the competition between arguments (cf. Jordan, Ferguson & Haglin 2022) and especially the persuasive influence of competing interpretations of

UBI policy – i.e. to what extent constituencies are persuaded by the interpretative struggle taking place in public debate.

To probe the persuasive influence of the UBI debate I executed a framing experiment that presented a representative sample of participants with leftist and rightist arguments in favour and against UBI in various compositions. Overall I found that counterarguments erode support regardless of whether UBI is framed as leftist or rightist. Rather than inducing directed motivated reasoning (Mullinix 2015; Taber & Lodge 2006), constituencies are more attentive to counterarguments (Bizer & Petty 2005; Cobb & Kuklinski 1997:91), aligning with earlier studies in this area (Jordan, Ferguson & Haglin 2022; Yueng 2022; Bay & Petersen 2006). The disagreement on the left in public debate forms an interesting exception: exposure to leftist arguments both in favour and against UBI depolarizes support, by reducing support on the left and increasing support on the right. While the leftist division is often understood as an obstacle to the feasibility of UBI (e.g. De Wispelaere 2016), this finding suggests that the rightist constituency may be persuaded when confronted with divisions on the left.

Moreover, while support for the UBI proposal may be overestimated by public opinion surveys, popular support for UBI policy is not so easily constructed through framing efforts. The Dutch public is by now surprisingly well informed about the UBI proposal, mitigating concerns raised by Roosma and Van Oorschot (2020) and Rossetti et al. (2020). More importantly, even though competing frames erode support – regardless of prior knowledge – constituencies remain stable in their direction of support. Students of framing effects are thus also faced with a remarkably sober response from the general public: while popular support is readjusted in the debate following the hype surrounding UBI, the history of welfare discourse outweighs current policy debates in the process of opinion formation.

2 • THE MAIN TAKEAWAY

With four years invested in this dissertation, and reflection on the chapters and their results, I leave the reader with three main conclusions.

First, the popular support for UBI is remarkably stable and coherent resembling the frozen conflicts underlying welfare politics. Second, the proposal was legitimated in public debate by a turn towards social investment discourse, showing that the debate was drawn back into the 'frozen' state of welfare politics. Third, I suggest that the achievements in the UBI debate have been facilitated by the ambiguities surrounding the proposal: the lack of political entrenchment may have facilitated the turn towards social investment.

Frozen conflicts

My work challenges much of the existing work in this area: popular support for UBI is remarkably stable and coherent. This conclusion, insofar as it holds, has strong implications for the so-called "multidimensional" studies of UBI support (e.g. Chrisp, Laenen & Van Oorschot 2020), and the study of framing UBI (e.g. Perkio Rincón & van Draanen 2019).

The multidimensional perspective on UBI support is based on the premise that "public support for the abstract idea may not translate into support for specific models of basic income" (Chrisp, Laenen & Van Oorschot 2020:219). The UBI proposal may suit very different purposes depending on the details of its implementation (e.g. De Wispelaere & Stirton 2004), and so popular support for the proposal is argued to shift depending on which policy dimensions are emphasized. In short, these studies argue that support for UBI is ambiguous because the public is conflicted in their support for various aspects of the proposal. The study of UBI frames has also been keen on stressing that support for the proposal depends on the frames propagated in the media. For example, Perkio, Rincón & van Draanen (2019:238) argue that the debate has "a profound impact on the nature and degree of popular support or opposition to the issue". Similarly, Caroll & Engel (2021:411) view frames as tools "to promote the idea amongst the public". In accordance, some studies have found that UBI support drastically drops when mentioning immigrants (Bay & Pederson 2006) and the affordability of the scheme. These concerns over the

coherence and stability of support for UBI are further strengthened by those who doubt "whether respondents fully understand the impact of introducing a BI" (Roosma & Van Oorschot 2020:203), given that also in the Netherlands "respondents did not show well-developed attitudes towards a UBI" (Rossetti et al. 2020:288). Popular support for UBI has thus been argued to be ambiguous and easily swayed by framing the proposal in media debates.

Contrary to the idea of attitudinal dimensionality, in Chapter 2 I have shown that support for UBI is surprisingly coherent. Turning to a single policy design – the most popular liberal-egalitarian proposal – allowed me to account for the covariance in support between policy aspects that has thus far been ignored. This analysis of the attitudinal structure challenges the idea of multidimensionality in two ways. First, while vignette experiments treat several aspects as distinct dimensions of support, my analysis suggests that these aspects are part of the same welfare controversy. I find that the level of the benefit and funding mechanisms (e.g. Chrisp, Pulkka & Rincón 2020; Stadelmann-Steffen & Dermont 2020) are part of a single redistributive controversy. Similarly, the various conditional aspects that are treated independently (e.g. Rincón, Vlandas & Hiilamo 2022; Laenen, Van Hootegem & Rossetti 2022) seem part of the same welfare controversy. This implies already that the dimensionality in support is overestimated by the vignette experiments. Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, I find that the relation between attitudinal dimensions is very strong, suggesting that the public tends to support and oppose UBI policy largely as a whole. Even when considering that this attitudinal coherence is probably inflated by scale effects, and regards only the dimensionality of a single kind of UBI, these findings show that UBI support is not so ambiguous and conflicted as some studies have implied. It seems that the survey experiments performed so far have overestimated the level of support by design, due to their inability to account for the covariance in support for policy aspects.

Moreover, in contrast to the premise that framing can build popular support, Chapter 5 suggests that constituencies are remarkably sober in their response to the interpretative struggle surrounding UBI. Even

though competing frames erode support, constituencies remain stable in their direction of support. This contrasts with previous studies that frame the proposal (e.g. Bay & Pedersen 2006), which gauge the response to a one-sided argument. Thus, while support for the UBI proposal may be overestimated by public opinion surveys, it is unlikely that framing will turn proponents into opponents and vice versa. In line with other recent studies that probe the influence of competing frames (Jordan, Ferguson & Haglin 2022; Yueng 2022), there is very little real evidence to support the argument that media frames build popular support by persuading constituencies.

Instead of support being highly ambivalent and fickle, my analyses show that constituencies draw on the historical conflicts that characterize welfare politics when forming opinions on the UBI proposal. To the extent that support for UBI is indeed stable and coherent, popular support is a mostly fixed and unambiguous obstacle to the implementation of UBI. There are limits to the extent that tweaking the design will expand popular support in the Netherlands – even assuming that abandoning unconditionality and universalism was a real option for UBI advocates in the first place. Similarly, the public debate has a limited influence on popular support for UBI: it seems unlikely that constituencies will be convinced by framing the proposal. Much like the political coalition for UBI (De Wispelaere 2016), popular support for UBI is largely gridlocked in institutionalized welfare controversies, a landscape of welfare compromises and frozen conflicts that is hard to change.

The social investment turn

The frozen landscape in popular support helps us to better understand how the UBI proposal was legitimated in the Twitter debate. Much like popular support, the debate is constrained by established welfare controversies, especially on redistribution. Rather than pushing a radical and utopian welfare agenda, proponents of the UBI proposal adopted the dominant language of activation (e.g. Taylor-Gooby 2008; Gilbert 2002) and fit their proposal into the emerging social investment

paradigm (Hemerijck 2018) by emphasizing cooperation and trust in the unemployed over discipline and suspicions of welfare abuse. Some view this turn to social investment as the abandonment of UBI's transformative potential, and rather "reproduce embedded systems of power" within the welfare state (Fouksman & Klein 2019:493). However, the social investment turn can also be viewed as a gradual step towards the revolutionary ideals underlying the radical case for UBI.

I have demonstrated that the Dutch UBI debate features a turn towards social investment. The automation narrative is perhaps the best-known 'discursive innovation' in the UBI debate (e.g. Perkiö Rincón & van Draanen 2019). Some suggest that the UBI debate is "fuelled" by high unemployment (Groot & Van der Veen 2000; Groot Muffels & Verlaat 2019:280), and proponents of the automation narrative similarly leverage the prospects of mass unemployment to justify UBI. However, the role of automation in the Twitter debate has been relatively marginal. Instead, proponents framed UBI predominantly in terms of social investment. In what I have called the social investment turn (see also Perkiö 2020; Hemerijck 2018), UBI proponents pushed arguments on activation and deregulation to the centre of the debate: the broadly shared critique of inefficient and perverse welfare bureaucracies – including activation policies – was leveraged to justify a more cooperative and trustful approach to social assistance. Proponents of UBI did not only adopt the language of activation but also contributed to a changing activation narrative. The UBI debate framed unconditionality as activating, arguing that it removes work disincentives and fosters cooperation from welfare recipients.

Since the institutional embeddedness of welfare politics makes radical policy change very difficult, the gradual transformation of policy arrangement may be the only realistic option. Questions of affordability and freeriding that still mark the welfare debate today are as old as the welfare state itself, stemming from historical conflicts over the redistribution of wealth and the work ethic (e.g. Van Leeuwen 1994). Rather than being resolved, these controversies continue to be constructed and reconstructed in the debate. Institutionalized wel-

fare controversies regarding redistribution and the work obligation continue to shape policy formation and are a formidable obstacle to reforms that depart from them (e.g. Pierson 1993). In accordance, some UBI advocates have argued for the "low road" towards implementing UBI (Jordan 2012; see also Groot & van der Veen 2000:216): pushing technocratic solutions with no ideological baggage that gradually change the system of social security from the inside (see also Hacker, Pierson & Thelen 2015). The social investment turn may be seen as such a gradual transformation (Roosma 2022), potentially introducing a drift towards unconditional social assistance in the long term.

However, rather than viewing the "royal way" and the "low road" as mutually exclusive strategies for implementing UBI (Jordan 2012; see also Groot & van der Veen 2000:216), I observed a symbiosis between the two: the principled debate legitimized a gradual shift in social assistance policy. Twitter audiences form a particularly interesting part of this legitimation process. While I am cautious in ascribing too much agency based on a descriptive study, it is apparent that a substantial number of people in the Twitter debate endorsed the experiments with unconditional social assistance, even before their announcement in municipal politics. Similarly, but to a lesser extent, several actors have addressed politicians directly on Twitter in an attempt to engage them in the discussion. The public policy debate seems to have played an important part in justifying a gradual transformation of social assistance policies, and may over time – with continued attention – amount to a fundamental transformation of power relations embedded in the welfare state.

The achievements of ambiguity?

The UBI proposal is a unique phenomenon in welfare politics because it is an ambiguous proposal: the case for UBI policy is made from many political angles, while key controversial aspect such as redistributive outcomes are ignored. . Due to the historical formation of interest groups and political parties, welfare state issues are typically strongly politicized, and in the 'new' welfare state the initiative is very often

taken by the political establishment. UBI debate, on the other hand, is instigated by fringe journalism and amplified by Twitter audiences rather than led by political elites. Moreover, rather than being 'owned' by a single political party, the case for UBI has been made along many ideological lines (for an overview see Widerquist et al. 2013), and in one form or another the proposal can be framed to suit the interests of almost every party on the political spectrum (De Wispelaere & Stirton 2004; see also Chrisp & Martinelli 2019).

This lack of political ambiguity is also visible in popular support. Throughout my work, I find that societal elites and the general public are equally ambivalent towards UBI. The highly educated strata in society are equally ambiguous in their support as the lower educated strata, something that should not happen in a top-down diffusion of ideas (see Converse 1964; Feldman & Zaller 1992). I find no evidence for politically motivated reasoning in response to frames, as one would expect in politically polarized issues (e.g. Mullinix 2015; Taber & Lodge 2015). Finally, in contrast to framing theories (e.g. Sniderman & Thierault 2004:146; Hansen 2007), UBI frames erode support even amongst those who claim to be informed on UBI, which illustrates the lasting uncertainty surrounding the idea. While some have expressed concerns over a lack of understanding of UBI amongst the masses (Roosma & Van Oorschot 2020:203; Rossetti et al. 2020:288), the (lack of) ambiguity is ubiquitous in all strata of Dutch society, and seems to be a consequence of the lack of political entrenchment.

While this conceptual flexibility is often presented as a weakness, e.g. masking "persistent political division" behind a "veil of vagueness" (De Wispelaere 2016:136), it can also be seen as a strength. The ambiguity surrounding UBI and the corresponding lack of political entrenchment may have facilitated the social investment turn in the UBI debate. In the third chapter of this dissertation I have shown in detail how proponents framed UBI as "beyond left and right". While this strategy failed in building a cross-partisan political coalition for the proposal, the ambiguity did allow the framing of UBI as a social investment policy. Without strong commitments from political parties and with a range of arguments available, policymakers were able to lever-

age the momentum for UBI to start experiments with unconditional social assistance under the guise of activating the unemployed (Groot Muffels & Verlaat 2019; Roosma 2022). Proponents were generally happy with the momentum for UBI regardless of the reason for its implementation, and (initially) saw little harm in its rebranding UBI as an activation policy. Without the ambiguity in its framing and the confusion amongst political elites, the policy experiments would have been more likely to strand in the gridlock of welfare politics.

3 • A WAY FORWARD

I conclude my work with a discussion of the limitations of this dissertation and suggest some ways forward to address them. The most straightforward limitations of this research lie in the generalizability and representativity of the debate under observation. First, being a case study, the reader should bear in mind that the research is restricted to the Dutch population. On the one hand, there is research that points to country differences in the popular support for UBI (e.g. Parolin & Siöland 2020, Stadelmann-Steffen & Dermont 2020, Kozák 2021), finding higher levels of support in poorer countries with less developed welfare states. As an aside, the political currency of the UBI proposal seems higher in more developed countries such as the Netherlands and Finland. On the other hand, the media framing of the proposal is remarkably consistent between countries, with automation, activation and redistribution being recurrently discussed in many Western media outlets (e.g. Perkio, Rincon & van Draanen 2019; Yang 2018; Caroll & Engel 2022; see also Chapter 3). Thus, while some have observed a globalization of the debate (Sloman 2018) – which makes the Dutch case more generalizable – there are still differences in popular support most likely tied to the historical legacies of welfare provision. Comparative research on the attitudinal structure and framing of UBI support is needed before my claim on the coherence and stability of UBI support can be generalized to other countries.

Moreover, while Twitter data has strong advantages, it does not represent the public debate as a whole. Despite the strong connection

between traditional and social media (Russel Neuman et al. 2014), the debate on Twitter is known to be particularly polarized (e.g. Barberá et al. 2015). Whereas the platform disproportionally hosts left-leaning individuals (Wieringa et al. 2018), the voice of the conservative right and conspiracy thinkers has swelled over time, and with it the perception of political in- and out-groups (Bail 2021). These audiences especially make Twitter different from the more traditional media such as newspapers and television, since audiences have the power to amplify issues through their collective engagement (Zhang et al. 2018). Fortunately, the debate on UBI took place almost a decade ago, in an arguably less polarized time and place. The convergence with newspaper analyses (e.g. Perkiö, Rincon & Van Draanen 2019; Carroll & Engel 2022) and political debates (e.g. Perkiö 2020) does establish some confidence that the debate on Twitter reflects the UBI debate more generally.

Additionally, the focus on a single policy discussion also limits its generalizability to other (social) policy debates. The UBI proposal is unique in the extent of its detachment from existing policy arrangements, its conceptual flexibility – being in principle "disarmingly simple" (Van Parijs 1992:1; but see De Wispelaere & Stirton 2012) and "'beyond' left and right" (Chrisp & Martinelli 2017:477) – and the activism of its most avid supporters (Caputo & Liu 2020). These characteristics have likely allowed the proposal to escape immediate political categorization, and have arguably contributed to the media hype surrounding the idea. In contrast, most social policies are tied to fixed interest groups such as pensioners or parents and are already heavily entrenched in terms of political representation. Rather than dismissing UBI as wholly idiosyncratic, however, the case can be interpreted as a counterfactual instance that informs a more general theory on the role of ambiguity and activism in the (social) policy process.

Finally, the study of UBI's political feasibility as well as the study of policy processes more generally would benefit from separating and comparing the frames and coalitions in the media and policy spheres. My work implies that media debate can facilitate policy (coalition) formation by legitimizing policy alternatives, but I do not analyse the internal process of decision-making that takes place outside the media

sphere (but see Roosma 2022). The narrative accounts of the UBI debate (e.g. Van der Veen 2019; Sloman 2018) also do not make a systematic distinction between the debate in the media and the negotiations and proposals within governments. Scholars of the policy process, however, do emphasize that the media and policy debates have distinct logics and their contents do not necessarily coincide: the media publicly communicate while policymakers privately negotiate (Crow & Lawlor 2016; Schmidt 2008). There is thus much to learn about the extent to which the media facilitates and blocks policy options from comparing the frames and coalitions between media and policy spheres.

While there is a particular disconnect between public debate and popular support, the public debate at least seems to have some influence on the policy process. Over the course of its legitimation, perhaps thanks to its conceptual flexibility, the concept of UBI was 'deradicalized' to fit with the dominant welfare paradigm on activation and social investment. Simultaneously, the ideas about activating the unemployed are also gradually shifting from sanctions and incentives towards cooperation and trust. To build on the analogy by Wright (2012:9): a fish may alter the ecosystem, but the ecosystem also alters the fish. UBI had an impact on the policy process that may build over time (e.g. Roosma 2022; see also Jordan 2012), but in the process, the radical wings of the UBI proposal have been clipped, as the proposal was fitted into the dominant paradigm of targeted activation. Time will tell whether the genes of UBI are strong enough to make a lasting impact on the social policy discourse.

7 Endnotes

[1]https://twitter.com/user/status/513786520092692480
[2]https://twitter.com/user/status/513776433760833536
[3]https://twitter.com/user/status/513720578709016577
[4]https://twitter.com/user/status/513774915766743040
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Appendices

TABLE A.1 *Appendix A2: Evaluation of demographic composition sample*

		Sample	Population	Δ
Gender	Male	0.514	0.497	0.017
	Female	0.486	0.503	-0.017
Age	20-40	0.272	0.324	-0.052
	40-65	0.421	0.426	-0.005
	65-80	0.293	0.191	0.102
	>80	0.030	0.061	-0.031
Migration background	Native	0.915	0.754	0.161
	First gen.	0.038	0.132	-0.095
	Second gen.	0.048	0.114	-0.066
Educational level	Low	0.271	0.283	-0.012
	Middle	0.335	0.358	-0.023
	High	0.394	0.342	0.052
Household income	<40.000	0.617	0.781	-0.164
	>40.000	0.383	0.215	0.169

Note: population data retrieved from CBS StatLine (2021) (opendata.cbs.nl/statline)
Note: age group <20 excluded due to sampling restrictions
Note: household income threshold in sample is <43.500

TABLE A.2 *Appendix B2: Confirmatory Factor Analysis of the dimensionality of UBI support*

	One-dimensional	*Two-dimensional*		*Three-dimensional*			*Four-dimensional*			
	Social change	Social rights (a)	Targeting (b)	Equality (a)	Redistribution (b)	Targeting (c)	Equality (a)	Redistribution (b)	Need (c)	Targeting (d)
Universal	0.800	0.878		1.000			1.000			
Redistributive	0.372	0.372			0.402			1.000		
Sufficient	0.689	0.729			0.837				1.000	
Individual	0.633		0.627			0.662				0.624
No means-test	0.742		0.804			0.810				0.808
Extra earnings	0.651		0.629			0.694				0.692
Unconditional	0.627		0.632			0.629				0.631
Factor correlations										
(a)			0.824		0.765	0.730		0.300	0.639	0.730
(b)						0.696			0.337	0.302
(c)										0.580

TABLE A.3 *Appendix C2: Correlation matrix of UBI aspects*

	Universal	Sufficient	Redistributive	Individual	No means-test	Extra earnings	Unconditional
Universal	1.000	0.639	0.300	0.463	0.584	0.505	0.468
Sufficient	0.639	1.000	0.337	0.448	0.412	0.395	0.414
Redistributive	0.300	0.337	1.000	0.346	0.172	0.121	0.310
Individual	0.463	0.448	0.346	1.000	0.474	0.408	0.428
No means-test	0.584	0.412	0.172	0.474	1.000	0.609	0.515
Extra earnings	0.505	0.395	0.121	0.408	0.609	1.000	0.367
Unconditional	0.468	0.414	0.310	0.428	0.515	0.367	1.000

TABLE A.4 *Appendix D2: Descriptive statistics of post-hoc variables*

	Min.	Max.	Mean | %	s
Gender				
Male			51.3	
Female			48.7	
Age	18	95	52.1	17.4
Migration background				
Native			91.5	
First gen.			3.7	
Second gen.			4.8	
Income				
<14100			6.4	
14100-36500			23.9	
36500-43500			17.8	
43500-73000			19.5	
No response			22	
Education				
Low			27.1	
Middle			33.5	
High			39.1	
Employment status				
Employed			44.8	
Student			6	
Self-employed			6.7	
Retired			28.6	
Benefits			7.5	
Housework			3.9	
Searching for job			0.9	
Other			1.6	
Party family				
Liberal			15.5	
Conservative			10.6	
Social democrat			13.7	
Green left			12.6	
Labour			16.9	
Populist			10.1	
Other			20.6	

Note: the coding of party families is as follows. Liberal: VVD, JA21. Conservative: CDA, CU, SGP. Social Democrat: D66, Volt. Green Left: GroenLinks, PvdD. Labour: PvdA, SP. Populist: PVV, FvD.

Appendix A3: Arguments covered in Tegenlicht documentaries on UBI

All three thematic episodes of Tegenlicht use the threat of automated labour to argue for the necessity of UBI policy. If unaddressed, the automation of labour would increase economic inequalities and create an insecurely employed underclass. A second tenet throughout the episodes criticizes the existing welfare state as inefficient and unable to protect citizens from poverty or guide them towards employment. The first two episodes both use the Mincome experiment as a proof of concept, while the last discusses several pilots, and the Alaskan permanent fund. Thirdly, the leftist and rightist political appeal is mentioned in all three documentaries.

The most notable reasons to implement UBI policy are (a) providing income security in the face of automation, (b) allowing the working poor to invest in education, childcare and basic goods and (c) increase happiness, social trust and reduce poverty stress.

The first documentary more strongly emphasizes the 'politization of technology', in an attempt to raise awareness of the social and political consequences of technological progress. The second documentary additionally includes an rough calculation of costs, a more comprehensive critique of the existing welfare system and a first call for experiments. The third documentary introduces the precariat and a resource dividend.

Most arguments in favour of UBI are also mentioned in at least one of the documentaries. Exception are the (marginal) arguments that UBI would reduce consumerism – a very green argument, and that UBI would allow for abolishing minimum wage legislation – a very liberal argument. Counterarguments are naturally much less addressed in the documentaries. Only the freeriding argument is mentioned in two of the three episodes. The affordability of UBI is also defended in one episode.

The documentaries are available (in Dutch) on: https://www.npostart.nl/vpro-tegenlicht

Tegenlicht also hosts a thematic collection of materials on UBI:

https://www.vpro.nl/programmas/tegenlicht/kijk/bundels/onderwerpen/actueel/basisinkomen.html

Episode 1: The necessity of a utopia (2014-02-23)

We live in a world of abundance, thanks to our globalized economy. In spite of this, continued feelings of societal resentment suggest that there is much to improve in society. We need to start thinking more collectively, and recognize technological progress as a political opportunity to create a 'world without work'. Universal Basic Income is an alternative to existing welfare programmes that can help us achieve this utopia: it does not stigmatize the unemployed, eliminates poverty, increases well-being and reduces hospitalization rates and school dropout rates. The people that started working less are doing so to invest in their children or in themselves.

Episode 2: Free money (2014-09-21)

The automation of work threatens the existing economic system, by taking jobs and by increasing economic inequalities. In addition, the current welfare system is inefficient, stigmatizing and discourages work. The Mincome experiment shows that a UBI made the working poor invest in themselves – through healthcare, basic goods, education – and take up caring tasks. The suggestion is that a UBI would create economic growth and reduce health costs. UBI would also simplify the welfare bureaucracy, reduce income inequality, and enable people to develop themselves. Robots will be the new wage slaves. Still, its implementation would require higher taxes in some form, and people would have to accept that some people choose not to work. Experiments may help us understand how people would react to a UBI.

Episode 3: Experimenting with free money (2015-04-12)

Digital technologies will automate work, and the resulting inequalities can only be tackled by income without work. The current welfare system cannot provide income security. UBI would grant income security to the precariat, make unpaid work as equally valued as paid work, reduce poverty stress and its mental effects, increase self-investments and lead to more social trust. Community-based experiments with UBI are held in Berlin, Groningen and India. Alaska has a permanent fund that allocates dividends from oil, which is considered as a common resource.

The political stalemate with respect to work is recognized. The Alaskan fund has been set up as a mechanism to elicit self-interest in its provision, to protect it against reforms.

TABLE A.5 Arguments mentioned in each episode of Tegenlicht

Label	Description	Ep. 1	Ep. 2	Ep. 3
Security	UBI will end poverty, provide a sufficient livable income, as a social right	yes	yes	yes
Automation	there aren't enough jobs for everyone now or in the future	yes	yes	yes
Capitalism	capitalism is unsustainable, the value of work cannot be expressed in terms of money	no	no	yes
Resources	UBI should be funded by redistribution the gains from natural resources (such as natural gas)	no	no	yes
Revolutionary	UBI will create a new social contract / social system, fits the future economy, leads to utopian society, takes power away from elites	yes	yes	yes
Unconditional	UBI removes the work obligation, the relation between work and income	yes	no	yes
Universal	Everyone receives UBI (not just the unemployed)	yes	no	no
Leisure	UBI will afford more free time, parttime employment, the good life	yes	no	yes
Control	The existing welfare system is controlling, repressive, humiliating, distrusting	yes	yes	no
Freedom	UBI liberate, emancipates, frees us from wage slavery, grants freedom of choice	no	yes	no
Wellbeing	UBI reduces stress, improves health, increases happiness	yes	yes	yes

TABLE A.5 *Continued*

Label	Description	Ep. 1	Ep. 2	Ep. 3
Trust	UBI promotes social trust, social solidarity, trust between people & govt	no	no	yes
Entrepreneurs	UBI stimulates entrepreneurship, innovation, creativity, personal development, education	no	yes	no
Participation	UBI rewards unpaid meaningful labour like caring, volunteering	yes	yes	yes
Consumption	UBI reduces consumption/consumerism by taxing consumer goods	no	no	no
Synthesis	UBI is liberal-egalitarian (bridging the political divide)	yes	yes	yes
Poverty trap	Existing welfare disincentivizes work	no	yes	no
Precariat	The existing welfare system excludes a group (forcibly) flexible self-employed, UBI enables flexicurity	no	no	yes
Activation	UBI activates the unemployed (into paid employment)	no	yes	no
Minimum wage	UBI will allow lower wages, no minimum wage laws	no	no	no
Growth	UBI will create economic growth/stability, people consume more	no	yes	no
Flat-rate income tax	UBI will (or should) be accompagnied by a flat-rate income tax	no	no	no
Bureaucracy	the welfare state bureaucracy is inefficient	no	yes	yes
Deregulation	UBI will simplify the system of social security: it removes means-testing & activation policy, replaces supplements & subsidies. It is more efficient and less sensitive to welfare fraud	no	yes	no
Inequality	There is high income/wealth inequality	yes	yes	yes
Redistributive	UBI is about income redistribution	yes	yes	yes
Fair	UBI will (un)fairly redistribute income	yes	yes	yes

TABLE A.5 *Continued*

Label	Description	Ep. 1	Ep. 2	Ep. 3
Responsibility	people should take individual responsibility, UBI makes people dependent on govt	no	no	no
Freeriding	With UBI, people will stop working, it encourages emigration, it makes people lazy, it appeals to parasites	yes	yes	no
Immigration	UBI attracts immigrants	no	no	no
Inflation	UBI causes inflation, raises prices	no	no	no
Social benefits	Social assistance/ pensions is the same as UBI (pro) or UBI is not the same (con)	no	no	no
Socialist	UBI is socialist/communist	no	no	no
Need	The rich don't deserve UBI, the needy are left behind, UBI destroys social security	no	no	no
Wage subsidy	UBI will lower wages and thus force people to work for less	no	no	no
Liberal	UBI is a liberal concept, liberals support UBI	yes	yes	no
Unrealistic	UBI will never work, unrealistic, utopian	no	no	no
Affordable	UBI is affordable	no	yes	no
Evidenced	there is evidence that UBI works	yes	yes	yes
Experiment	we should experiment with UBI / unconditional social assistance	no	yes	yes
Political support	politicians (should) support ubi, there is political momentum	no	yes	yes
Popular	UBI is popular (on Twitter)	yes	yes	yes
Free money	UBI is free money	yes	yes	no

Note: Two independent raters coded the second and third documentary, yielding an average agreement of 79% and an average interrater reliability of k=.560.

FIGURE A.1 *Appendix B3: comparison of argument frequency between days*

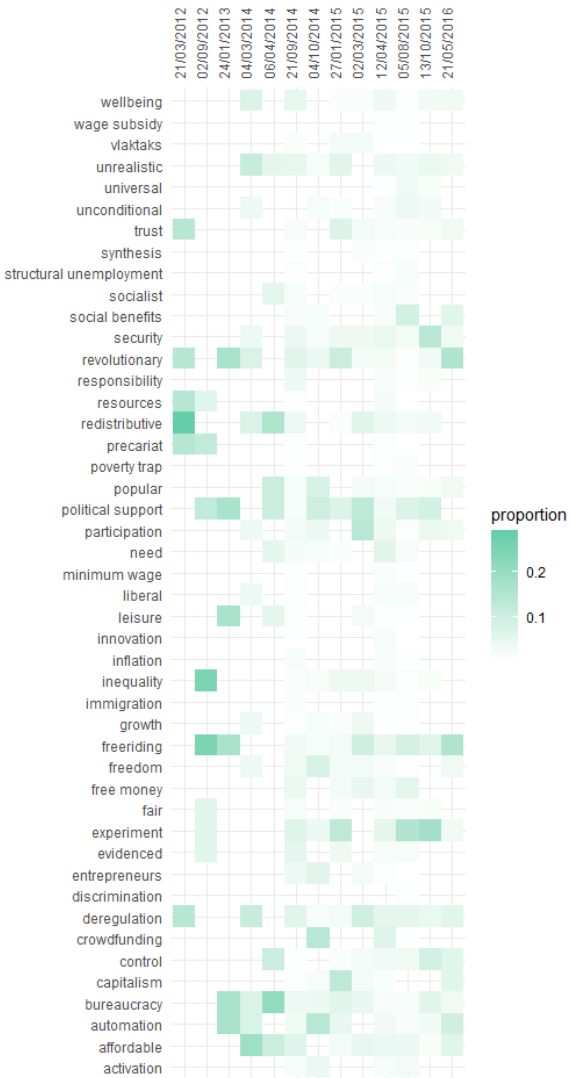


TABLE A.6 *Appendix C3: Overview and description of coding scheme*

Argument label	Position towards UBI	Tweet (excerpt) example
Welfare conditionality		
free money	neutral (frame)	Municipalities plan to hand out 'free money' to welfare recipients.
unconditional	neutral (frame)	A basic income that is discussed, is unconditional. See also: http://t.co/cJhO2MAfoF
capitalism	neutral (problem)	#basicincome. What capitalism owes you in expenses
control	neutral (problem)	Is basic income the same as our social assistance without the municipal bully-policy? #Tegenlicht
consumption	pro	Finance a #basicincome with a green tax system - two birds with one stone http://t.co/IQ8iT1R44K
freedom	pro	#basicincome can be living in freedom for many
participation	pro	The #basicincome seems to me an indispensable step to realising the idea of the #participationsociety.
stigma	pro	Simply belonging also without paid labour, what a relief! #freemoney #basicincome #Tegenlicht
trust	pro	I dream of a society based on #trust. In #Utrecht they will try it out. Are we worth #basicincome
wellbeing	pro	Less stress and psychological diseases because of #basicincome #mincomeproject More happiness
freeriding	con	Would a basic income make people lazy (...)? #Tegenlicht
immigration	con	Besides, this will attract even more immigrants #basicincome
responsibility	con	Why would you want basic income? Why not in principal take your individual responsibility (...)? #tegenlicht

TABLE A.6 *Continued*

Argument label	Position towards UBI	Tweet (excerpt) example
Economic redistribution		
redistributive	neutral (frame)	Oooh, now I understand. They want to use #basicincome to #level incomes (...).
social benefits	neutral (frame)	isn't #basicincome the same as social assistance? #tegenlicht
universal	neutral (frame)	Idea of #basicincome is that all Dutch people will receive it! (...) ..https://t.co/QihaEJ9Eyh
inequality	neutral (problem)	The income inequality has become obscene #basicincome
precariat	neutral (problem)	About 'precariat' and basic income: https://t.co/xZCNccatKJ
affordable	pro	Exactly. No idea where all this money is supposed to come from. (...)
fair	pro	Every human being has the right to a basic income, just like education, safety, healthcare, etc.
security	pro	NL : Free money effective against poverty (...) http://dlvr.it/6z625M
vlaktaks	con	The basic income. First a flat-rate income tax. Then we will continue talking #tegenlicht
socialist	con	Ah, fortunately #NPO2 - a basic income for everyone. That is also a resounding success in Cuba, N-Korea, Venezuela etc. *ahem*
liberal	con	Exactly, like this it is a libertarian attempt to abolish all social security
need	con	Also directly indicates that people who cannot do something extra [red: in addition to UBI] will end up in a position of poverty #basicincome #tegenlicht
resources	pro	The polluter can pay the #basicincome though #ecotax as earth-dividend.
wage subsidy	con	If there are decent jobs you don't need that basic income. It will mostly lead to lousy jobs next to BI.
inflation	con	This will become a stagflation scenario. Shrinking consumption and still rising prices

TABLE A.6 *Continued*

Argument label	Position towards UBI	Tweet (excerpt) example
Welfare state efficiency		
innovation	neutral (frame)	In a minute #tegenlicht the #basicincome. The most important social innovation of the coming 50 years.
bureaucracy	neutral (problem)	That entire benefit- and deduction system needs to go. Basic income is an excellent idea.
poverty trap	neutral (problem)	Basic income solves poverty trap (...). #tegenlicht
deregulation	pro	The basic income. Interesting. #Tegenlicht Definitely saves a lot of hassle. And "fraud". Which often isn't fraud but mistake.
minimum wage	pro	With additional advantage: wages can go down. That version is still interesting. Canadian setup is nonsense.
activation	pro	Exactly. Basic income actually stimulates work. #tegenlicht
entrepreneurs	pro	Because of basic income people become more entrepreneurial (...) #Tegenlicht
Automation and structural unemployment		
automation	pro	Soon not everybody can work for their money because the jobs are done by robots or cut out #basisinkomen
leisure	pro	The hunter-gatherer only worked 3 hours per day and lived in #abundance. #basicincome #Tegenlicht
revolutionary	pro	Can #basic income offer a solution to a new economy in a new age? #tegenlicht
structural unemployment	pro	There simply aren't jobs for everyone, let alone a prosperous future. There are just too many pigs at the trough.
Miscellaneous		
crowdfunding	neutral	Crowdfunding action for 'free salary' inhabitant Groningen #basicincome http://t.co/wtfCl2L3fT
experiment	neutral	Experiment! That's a good idea. (Woerden?)
evidenced	pro	Free money works! #basicincome #Tegenlicht
growth	pro	#Tegenlicht With a #basicincome people will also save less, basic income is their anyway. Positive for economy.
political support	pro	Supporting basic income. Now [to convince] the politicians. #tegenlicht
popular	pro	Nice documentary. Basic income is totally back in the picture!
synthesis	pro	#basicincome is new dimension: social-liberal / liberal-social... neither socialism nor capitalism suffices as ideology
unrealistic	con	We already have a show for this. Its called Utopia. (...) #tegenlicht #basisinkomen

TABLE A.7 *Appendix A4: relative activity of political party elites during the 2010 parliamentary campaign and the UBI debate on peak events*

	Political campaign		UBI debate	
	Elites	Tweets	Elites	Tweets
VVD	0.189	0.287	0.104	0.163
PvdA	0.165	0.123	0.104	0.039
PVV	0.044	0.023	0.000	0.000
CDA	0.209	0.145	0.125	0.064
SP	0.044	0.034	0.188	0.443
D66	0.131	0.102	0.125	0.099
GL	0.087	0.129	0.354	0.192
CU	0.083	0.102	0.000	0.000
PvdD	0.034	0.042	0.000	0.000
SGP	0.015	0.012	0.000	0.000
Total N	206	28045	48	203

Note: the data from the 2010 parliamentary campaign is based on Graham, Jackson & Broersma (2016) and includes only national-level political elites. The data from the UBI debate includes also municipal elites.

Appendix B4: Technical procedures

This appendix elaborates on the technical procedure followed to identify discursive positions. Briefly, we first construct a two-mode network of actor-concept relations. Second, we transform this network into a weighted and signed network of actor (dis)agreement relations – figure 3 provides an example of the actor network and its relation to the underlying two-mode network. Third, we use spin-glass community detection to cluster actors based on their degree of agreement and disagreement across arguments. Fourth and lastly, we compute the discursive positions of each cluster by summing the positive and negative references to each argument of all actors assigned to that cluster. The main advantage of this approach over other classification techniques

such as latent class analysis (Vermunt & Magdison 2004) is that it retains the positions of individual actors in the discussion, allowing us to see which political elites endorse which position. Moreover, this approach explicitly models the many unmentioned concepts in a meaningful way, namely as a lack of (dis)agreement or as silence with respect to these concepts, which variable-centered clustering techniques would exclude as missing data.

We first construct an unweighted two-mode adjacency matrix of actor-concept relations, in which each actor is positively or negatively connected to their mentioned concepts. For each tweet we note (a) to what concepts the tweets refers (b) what position (positive or negative) is taken regarding the concept and (c) the username of the actor. For example in figure 3, the tweet "UBI is a liberating idea"[1] relates to the concept of freedom in a positive way. This information is arranged in a matrix where each row denotes an actor and each column represents a concept. The matrix contains the elements 1, 0, -1 for a positive, negative or no reference to each concept. Note that we hereby do not consider the number of times an actor references any single concept – we filter out duplicate concept references to make actors' positions (and interrelations) independent from their vocality.

This two-mode network is transformed into a (weighted and signed) one-mode actor network, in which actors are connected based on their tendency to (dis)agree across all concepts. By multiplying the two-mode adjacency matrix with its transpose, which contains both agreement and disagreement connections, the agreements and disagreements between actors are multiplied for each concept and summed across concepts. For example, the relation ε between the actors A and B in figure 3 equals $AB = 1 * -1 + 1 * -1 = -2$. Consequently, a stronger positive (or negative) connection between two actors represents more agreement (or disagreement) across concepts. Note that actor relations are ambivalent when the number of agreements equals the number of disagreements. This method thereby equates fully ambivalent relations – i.e. an equal number of agreements and disagree-

[1] http://www.twitter.com/user/status/560084343780302851

ments – to a lack of (dis)agreement. This network operationalization combines agreement and disagreement relations in a single network, effectively in the way described by Leifeld (2017:313) as the "subtract" method of normalizing networks.

Finally, after constructing the actor network, we employ a simple normalization procedure to correct the strength of connections for user activity levels (see Leifeld 2017:312). To do so, each connection between two actors is weighted by the average number of concepts they adopt. In our example, the weight ω equals $AB = (2 + 2)2 = 2$, and the weighted connection equals $ABAB = -1$. Normalized connections can thus be interpreted as the degree of similarity in discursive position, where connections of strength +1 indicate strong agreement between actors, and connections of strength -1 indicate strong disagreement. The connection values cannot exceed these limits, because we divide the connection strength by the total number of shared concept references (which in our case is equal to the unique number of shared concept references). Note that software such as the Discourse Network Analyzer uses a slightly different procedure to normalizing the edge weights – creating and normalizing the congruence and conflict networks separately and then subtracting the conflict weights from the congruence weights. However, sensitivity checks (available in the data package) show that the resulting edge weights are the same.

To identify discursive positions in the UBI debate, we cluster actors using the spin-glass algorithm (Reichardt & Bornholdt 2006; Traag & Bruggeman 2009). This algorithm groups actors by minimizing disagreement within clusters and agreement between clusters. It is based on social balance theory (e.g. Cartwright & Harary 1956), which posits for example that "a friend of a friend is also my friend", or "a friend of my enemy is also my enemy". In the context of actor-argument relations, actors belonging to the same discursive position tend to agree – i.e. maintain the same position towards the same concepts – while actors belonging to different discursive positions tend to disagree – i.e. holding inverse positions on the same concepts. Similar to a conventional social network (e.g. Altafini 2012), a perfectly balanced concept network is thus divided into completely coherent and opposing fac-

tions, wherein everyone tends to agree with those inside their cluster and tends to disagree with those outside their cluster.

In reality, perfectly polarized systems rarely occur. Actors are grouped together in spite of some internal conflict and external agreement. Instead, simply put, the spin-glass algorithm finds the optimal solution by maximizing internal agreement (*cohesion)* and external disagreement (*adhesion).* Actors are placed in different communities over a number of iterations, evaluating the cohesion and adhesion after each move. Cohesion becomes more strongly positive when a particular partitioning results in stronger positive ties and weaker negative ties within each community, compared to a randomly configured baseline model. Formally, the cohesion *c* for each community *s* is defined as the difference between the sum of all positive tie strengths $mss+$ and the (absolute) sum of all negative tie strengths $mss-$, subtracting that same difference $mss + -[mss-]$ in a randomly rewired baseline network.

$$c = (mss + -mss-) - (mss + -[mss-]) \qquad \text{(A.1)}$$

Adhesion *a* becomes more strongly negative when negative ties outweigh positive ties between clusters in the observed graph, again evaluated against a random baseline configuration. Although the algorithm optimizes towards most the strongly negative between-group relations, adhesion will be positive when between-group agreement exceeds between-group disagreement. Formally, given two clusters *r* and *s,* adhesion *a* is the difference between the sum of all agreement relations *m+* and the (absolute) sum of all disagreement relations *m-,* subtracted from that same difference $mrs + -mrs-$ in a randomly rewired network.

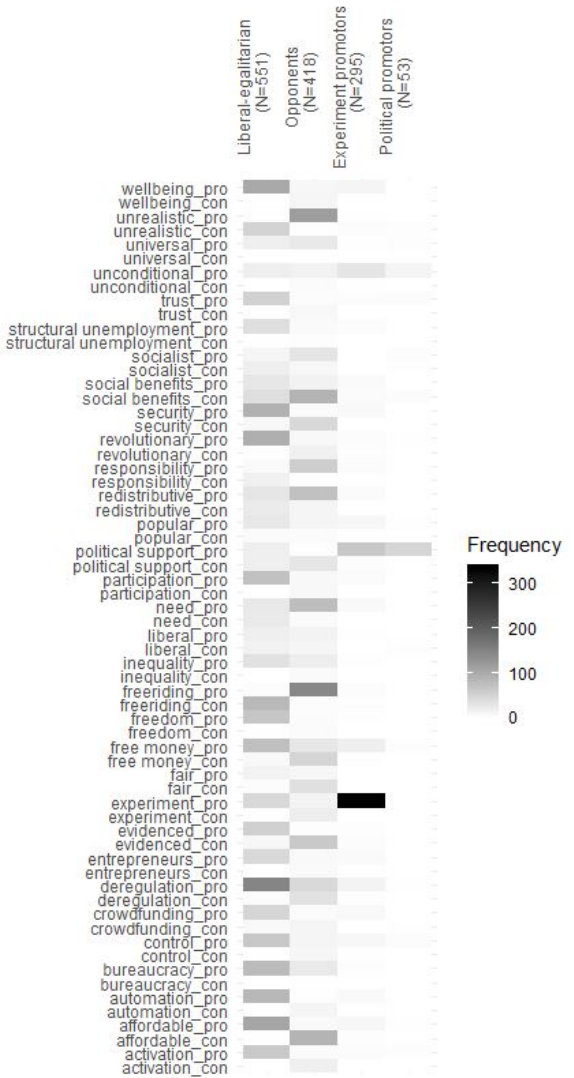
$$a = (mrs + -mrs-) - (mrs + -[mrs-]) \qquad \text{(A.2)}$$

Based on these measures, a modularity metric *Q* is computed. Known as the 'clustering coefficient', modularity summarizes the degree to which a network can be partitioned into isolated components, where *Q=1* equals a perfectly modular network. The

spin-glass algorithm calculates modularity based on both the absence of positive links between clusters and negative links within clusters. A perfectly modular network is one with no disagreement within clusters and no agreement between clusters. In our application (the default) we attribute equal weight to positive and negative connections.

Finally, we assess the discursive position of the detected communities. Since the spin-glass algorithm groups actors based on their overall level of (dis)agreement, the clusters only become substantively informative when we disentangle their positions towards various arguments. To do so, we sum the positive and negative references to each argument for all members of a community. These community-level profiles represent the substantive positions of "discursive coalitions" in the debate.

FIGURE A.2 *Appendix C4: frequency of support and opposition for each argument*



Note: this is a supplement to Figure 4.4. We derive ambivalence by comparing the frequencies for proposing and opposing the same argument within a cluster (pro/con). Amongst liberal-egalitarians, ambivalence is highest for the arguments 'liberal' (19/15), 'need' (26/24), 'political support' (19/18), 'redistributive' (29/23), 'social benefits' (28/37), and 'socialist' (10/18). Amongst opponents, ambivalence is highest for the arguments 'deregulation' (44/34), 'free money' (28/49), 'liberal' (14/10), and 'experiment' (13/20).

Appendix E4: Actor graphs and substantive positions per day

(see next pages)

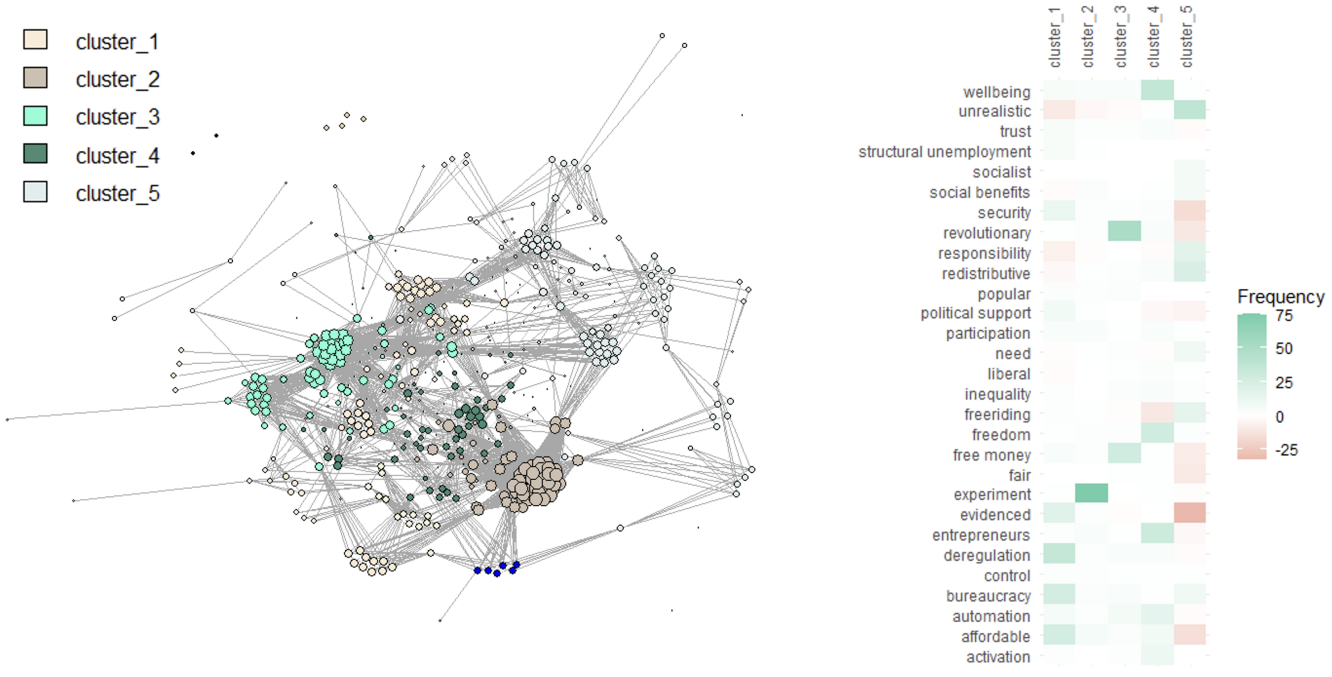


FIGURE A.3 Day 1: Dutch Twitter response to second Tegenlicht documentary "money for free"(2014-09-21)
Note: Discussion on day one features 493 actors and 46 concepts. Graph modularity Q = .446. Substantive positions of clusters larger than 30 actors (5 out of 9) are displayed on the right. For purposes of visualization the graph is based on agreement ties only. Node size is proportional to tie strength – larger nodes represent participants in stronger agreement with others. The graph layout is based on the Fruchterman-Reingold algorithm, where nodes in stronger agreement are placed closer together. Only ties with strength greater than the threshold .60 are plotted.

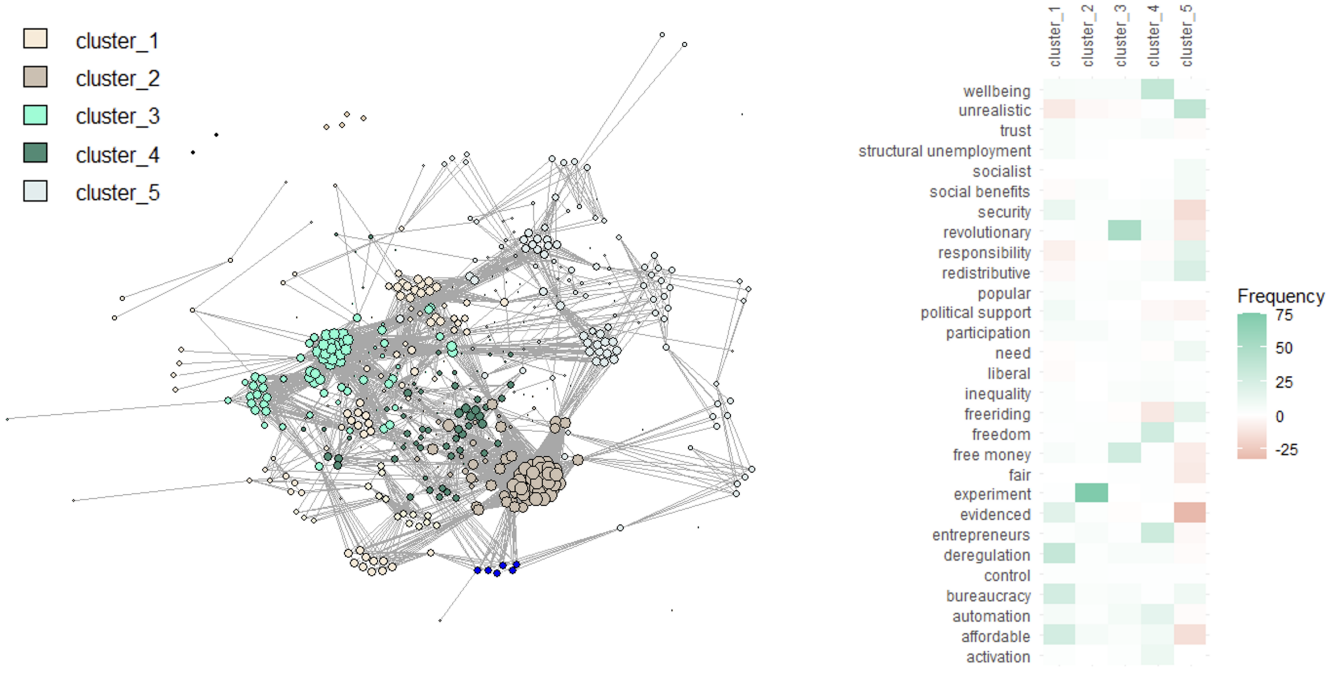


FIGURE A.4 Day 2: Twitter response to third Tegenlicht documentary "experimenting with 'free money'" (2015-04-12)
Note: Discussion on day one features 581 actors and 51 concepts. Graph modularity Q = .314. Substantive positions of clusters larger than 30 actors (4 out of 5) are displayed on the right. For purposes of visualization the graph is based on agreement ties only. Node size is proportional to tie strength – larger nodes represent participants in stronger agreement with others. The graph layout is based on the Fruchterman-Reingold algorithm, where nodes in stronger agreement are placed closer together. Only ties with strength greater than the threshold .60 are plotted.

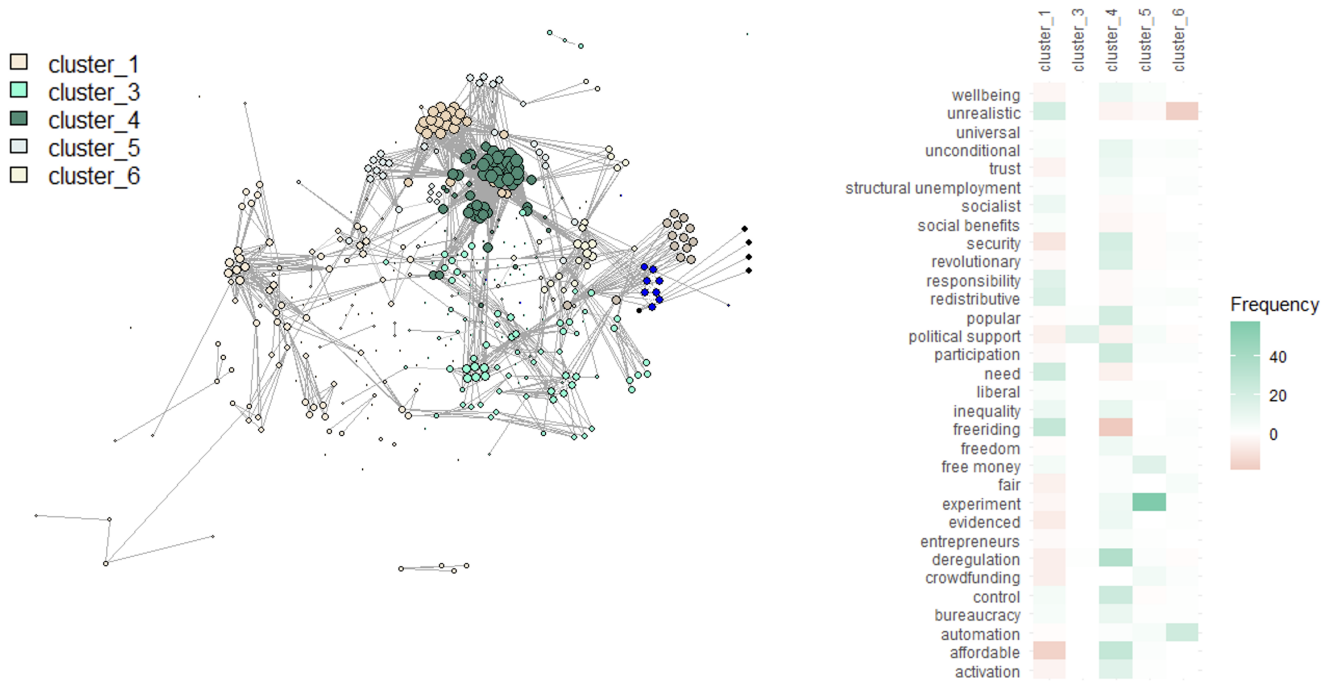


FIGURE A.5 Day 3: Twitter response to public announcement of local experiments with unconditional social assistance (2015-08-05)
Note: Discussion on day one features 581 actors and 51 concepts. Graph modularity Q = .314. Substantive positions of clusters larger than 30 actors (4 out of 5) are displayed on the right. For purposes of visualization the graph is based on agreement ties only. Node size is proportional to tie strength – larger nodes represent participants in stronger agreement with others. The graph layout is based on the Fruchterman-Reingold algorithm, where nodes in stronger agreement are placed closer together. Only ties with strength greater than the threshold .60 are plotted.

TABLE A.8 *Appendix A5: Evaluation of demographic composition sample*

		Sample	Population	Δ
Gender	Male	0.515	0.497	0.02
	Female	0.485	0.503	-0.02
Age	20-40	0.291	0.324	-0.03
	40-65	0.438	0.426	0.01
	65-80	0.236	0.191	0.05
	>80	0.027	0.061	-0.03
Migration background	Native	0.791	0.754	0.04
	First gen.	0.137	0.132	0.01
	Second gen.	0.072	0.114	-0.04
Educational level	Low	0.285	0.283	0.00
	Middle	0.414	0.358	0.06
	High	0.302	0.342	-0.04
Household income	<40.000	0.302	0.348	-0.05
	>40.000	0.698	0.652	0.05

Note: population data retrieved from CBS StatLine (2022) (opendata.cbs.nl/statline)
Note: age group <20 excluded due to sampling restrictions
Note: household income threshold in sample is <43.500

TABLE A.9 *Appendix B5: Differential effect of prior knowledge on framing on political polarization in UBI support (three-way interaction)*

		(1)		(2)		(3)	
Intercept		4.050	***	4.158	***	4.148	***
Political left-right placement (LR)		-.129	***	-.156	***	-.154	***
Frames	Control	ref.		ref.		ref.	
	Pro-Left	-.311	***	-.015		.005	
	Pro-Right	-.211	*	-.113		-.012	
	Divided Left	.043		-.316		-.484	
	Divided Right	-.284	**	.028		.093	
UBI knowledge	much	ref.		ref.		ref.	
	some / no	-.226	***	-.642	***	-.620	+
Interactions							
xz	LR*Control			ref.		ref.	
	LR*Pro-Left			-.056		-.060	
	LR*Pro-Right			-.004		-.025	
	LR*Divided Left			.074	+	.108	+
	LR*Divided Right			-.066		-.079	
xw	LR*Much Knowledge			ref.		ref.	
	LR*Some Knowledge			.087	***	.083	
zw	Control*Some Knowledge			ref.		ref.	
	Pro-Left*Some Knowledge			-.010		-.056	
	Pro-Right*Some Knowledge			-.130		-.360	
	Divided Left*Some Knowledge			.000		.386	
	Divided Right*Some Knowledge			.047		-.122	
xzw	LR* Pro-Left *Some Knowledge					.009	
	LR*Pro-Right*Some Knowledge					.046	
	LR*Divided Left*Some Knowledge					-.077	
	LR*Divided Right*Some Knowledge					.033	
R^2		0.306	***	0.333	***	0.336	***
ΔR^2				0.017	**	0.002	

Note: ***p<.001; **p<.01; *p<.05; +p<.10

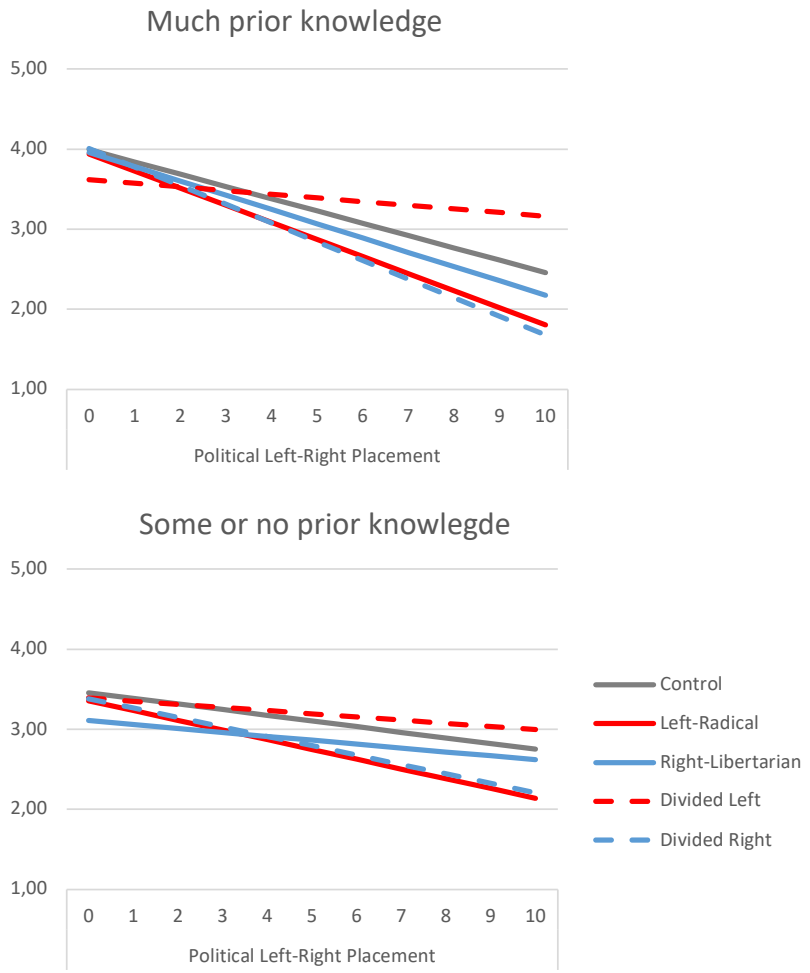


FIGURE A.6 *Appendix C5: Visualization of the moderating effect of prior knowledge (non-significant)*

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