

Basic Income and Degrowth?

Abstract

The paper starts from a literature review on the relationship basic income and degrowth and then develops some criticisms for which basic income might not be an adequate degrowth policy. It finally discusses the extent for which basic income might be a plausible degrowth proposal, but only as a social policy related to economic crisis (unwanted degrowth) therefore only of temporary, of secondary importance, towards a sustainable degrowth transition.

Highlights

socially sustainable degrowth relates to income redistribution → of these, a literature review on Basic Income is performed → it is not clear BI would foster degrowth in either consumption or in labour market participation → several criticisms are raised against BI → it discusses that BI can be relevant for certain situations only → although social inequalities are to be reduced, BI might not be an adequate policy in the broad degrowth sense

1. Introduction

One of the aims of degrowth is to move towards a more just and equitable society; to this extent, public policies that aim at income redistribution deserve a critical scrutiny.

Unconditional Basic Income (BI) is a form of social redistribution of wealth that is recently receiving much academic attention, and that will be the focus of this work.

It is important to analyse BI in relation to degrowth: would it contribute to a transition towards degrowth, and to what extent? The plausible effects on economic degrowth and degrowth in resource consumption will be assessed or, since there is no real case study to offer empirical evidence, at least a discussion on these effects will be structured.

In order to look at the economics of BI, the perspective on labour market and material consumption will be central.

Finally, a more philosophical argumentation of BI and autonomy (which is *per se* a perspective on which degrowth sources such as Castoriadis and Illich take in consideration) will be made.

These aspects of BI will be then discussed in the final section, in relation to whether degrowth policy proposal should include BI and, if not clearly affirmative, under which conditions BI could be proposed or which variants/understandings of degrowth would be incompatible with the inclusion of BI as a policy proposal.

Definition

I follow the definition offered by Raventos (2005, p.8): “Basic Income is an income paid by the state to each full member or accredited resident of a society, regardless of whether he or she wishes to engage in paid employment, or is rich or poor or, in other words, independently of any other sources of income that person might have, and irrespective of cohabitation arrangements in the domestic sphere”.

Standing (2008), drawing on a liberal notion of social justice, also notes five policy evaluation principles that are complied by BI: a Rawlsian principle of allowing the improvement of the worst-off group in society, the principle of not imposing controls only on some groups that would benefit from the policy (no paternalism), a principle that justifies benefit as a citizenship right rather than a charity given under certain behavioural conditions, the principle for which beneficiaries would not be prevented from pursuing

dignified work, rather promote the pursuit of meaningful work and, relevant for environmental conservation and degrowth, that the effects of the benefit transfer do not have a jeopardising effect on the environment.

In summary BI's core principles are social justice -notoriously the minmax principle-, the enhancing of the autonomous sphere and, drawing on the libertarian tradition¹, individual liberty; while BI's operational characteristics are unconditionality -so replacing social benefits based on means testing and simplifying bureaucratic administration- and universality -its defenders argue that it is not the role of BI to make a progressive tax system, that is the role of taxation.

2. A brief review of BI effects on consumption and the labour market.

BI has already attracted a lot of academic interest, an association, Basic Income Earth Network (<http://www.basicincome.org/bien/>) has been created which since 1986 organizes every second year a congress. Basic Income Studies is a peer-reviewed journal published since 2006. An attempt to review the whole literature goes out of the scope of this paper, some of the studies on BI that deal with the conceptual and philosophical foundation for BI are those from van Parijs (1991, 2004, 2009), from Guy Standing (2008 and 2013) and the book from Raventos (2005).

Rather, I will focus on two dimensions that are degrowth-relevant: the effect on consumption -and the consequent relation to the exploitation of natural resources and the exhaustion of the non-renewable ones- and on the participation in the labour market -and the relation to the capitalist mode of production.

In a pre-analytical way, BI is associated to degrowth policy proposals (Barcelona Degrowth Declaration, Kallis, 2011, Kallis et al., 2012, Mylondo, 2010 and 2012, <http://en.demagazine.eu/>); critiques of degrowth have also been addressed in terms of its BI proposal (Bellamy-Foster, 2011).

However this literature is still in an emerging phase, with general proposals and criticisms not yet deeply scrutinized. Andersson, 2012 claims that “The challenge is not to use BI as a means to hamper growth” because it could not be socially sustainable, “but to work out a combination of instruments – including a BI – that would liberate us from the imperative to grow”. According to Andersson, BI should therefore be related to policies that also hamper at least one of the three elements that constitute the actual growth syndrome: the economic issue related to capitalist profit motive, the social issue related to competition for social status and the political ecology /geopolitical issue related to international rivalry for securing access to diminishing natural resources. This, in the end, assumes that from a degrowth / imperative to grow perspective, it is the way BI is financed that becomes relevant. For instance consideration should be given to complementary policies helping in the build-up of the social voluntary sector -or even a compulsory civil service- or promoting a reduction in working hours (Andersson, 2012).

However, the likely effects are still suppositions, so that while for Andersson BI could foster more frugal lifestyles, guessing that “these new life styles would be less directed towards

¹ Milton Friedman has been a defender of a negative income tax, his main concern being based on proposing an efficient redistributive system that would minimize state intervention (reference, Franck's obituary in NYT, also 1962 *Capitalism and Freedom*, Uni of Chicago Press), other conservative Mps are in favour of BI (Canadian, participates to BIEN conferences). Truly, administrative costs of CCT (Conditional Cash Transfer schemes have been calculated to be between 3.8% and 20%, on average a relevant 9% of the total which is inefficiently wasted in the pipeline of the bureaucratic apparatus (Osterkamp, 2013)

mass consumption and more consciously ecological” (p.6), for Boulanger (2009) on the other hand the conclusion after his analysis on the plausible effects of BI is that “impact of BI on the consumption of more eco-efficient goods and services is likely to be weak, although it can play a role in the diffusion of a sufficiency attitude and would certainly help in experimenting with de-commodified modes of needs satisfaction.” (2009, p9).

A pilot project has been applied among a 1000-people village in Namibia between 2008 and 2011. Reports from this case study (Haarman et al. 2008 and 2009 in Osterkamp, 2013) stress that after one year many enterprises have been started with an increase (without counting for the BI transfer) of 29% in average income. Unfortunately the authors do not provide sufficient data and scientific evidence and tend to be biased by the pro BI values of the charities that have promoted the pilot project (Osterkamp, 2013). From the income perspective the pilot project does not allow for a definitive answer that it would foment income growth: defenders of BI want to sell their idea to policy makers so that they are rather concerned on the compatibility of BI and growth (by allowing opportunities for self-employment or for the start-up of new enterprises). However, this pro-growth bias in certain reports is not a prove for the demonstration that BI would contribute to socially sustainable degrowth.

In the past decade there has been a shift in NGOs and charities -particularly .com charities such as Give Directly, funded by Google or GoodVentures- towards conditional cash transfers (CCT) and more recently unconditional cash transfers (UCT) (The economist, 2013). The case produces enough evidence to show that unconditionality works -in fact receivers tend to invest the money where the donors would like, generally education or start-up of small self-enterprises that help driving people out of poorness. In particular, one study (Haushofer and Shapiro, 2013) concludes that “unconditional cash transfers have significant impacts on consumption and psychological well-being” (p.1). Also, since 2011 a project is been developed in India, with results showing that business start-ups have doubled (in a country where only 10% of population pays taxes and 50% are self-employed) (Fernandez, 2013)

BI effect on labour market

Hum and Simpson (2000) refer to an experiment which occurred on the '70s in Manitoba, Canada, and acknowledge that work reduction after introduction of BI had a minor role (they account 1% for men, 3% for wives and 5% for unmarried women) and also note that rather than the labour market, the introduction of BI had an effect on family structure (increased divorce rates)².

It is important to recognise the dynamics associated to BI on the allocation of time, between work (that allows for a desired level of consumption) or leisure. This is done by the analysis of the income and substitution effects after an application of BI. Raventos provides an explanation of the income and substitution effect of an increased wage, (p.87). In this line, a theoretical study by Gilroy et al. (2013) applies the analysis to the present German Social Security System which is structured in a way to reproduce an unemployment trap, which is key in explaining that work reduction after BI might be overcompensated by unemployed entering the labour market. In this way, although a basic neo-classical model on the

² This is an interesting case where individual freedom is enhanced by BI, but at the likely cost of increasing consumption, in case a family split-up ends up in the habilitation of one more dwelling.

leisure-consumption preference of three types of individuals (characterized by high preference of consumption over leisure, mid preference and low preference respectively) would show that BI constitutes an incentive to exit the labour market, in the German real-world situation social security transfers are conditional (CSS) and can be lost in case one starts to work -this case represents the unemployment trap. In this study, instead, the BI proposal is compared with CSS concluding that while those individuals with a medium preference to consumption (hence to work) would decrease their participation in the labour market, those with a high consumption preference will likely increase it (because after the BI they will be poorer than now, hence stimulated to work more for maintaining the level of consumption) and those with a low consumption preference (and high leisure preference) will also be stimulated to enter the labour market while now they are not since they would lose all their benefits.

3. Criticisms

In the relation between BI and employment, BI can be seen as a shift in the labour supply curve towards the left, so that wages are expected to increase and employed population voluntary decrease. This could constitute an interesting degrowth scenario (although, as I am going to address, not a sustainable one). However, when the unemployment trap is recognised, BI has the effect of favouring the entry in the labour market.

A further criticism, not yet addressed in the literature, is that beyond employed and unemployed population there is also the category of inactive population, namely those who have not an interest in the labour market (differently from the unemployed who do have an interest but cannot find a job)³. The effect of BI on the inactive population might push some of them in pursuing their own self-employed activities and many of them in consuming more (while we are not sure if those who pay for BI would consume less or sacrifice more leisure in order to maintain their level of consumption)⁴. The economic and environmental effects of employment related to BI are doubtful.

On the other hand, the social effects of BI on employment are clearly positive since the bargaining power of the working class against the employers would improve. As well, the pursue of more autonomous and self-enterprises can foment economic democracy (Johanishova and Wolf, 2012). BI is a socially desirable policy decreasing the power of the capitalist class -but, as the criticisms that follow will highlight- does not necessarily contribute to a reduction in the domination of “economicism” in our societies, neither in the reduction of the labour supply; not in decreasing GDP, neither in ensuring less material consumption and more natural resource preservation -which are all core elements for sustainable degrowth.

Here follows a series of criticism of economic, ontological, anthropological and social nature.

³ Clearly, the label inactive only refers in relation to the labour market: they might well be active in other non-market employment of their time. For instance, many urban and particularly rural squatters or neorural experimenting with alternative communities, are likely to be the case of people not participating in the labour market, therefore “inactive”

⁴The effects on consumption are only hypothetical, for which it cannot be stressed BI as a degrowth policy. For instance after BI the redistributive shift would make expensive goods replaced by more basic goods: what would the rich stop consuming? We cannot tell if they would reduce on the dog hairdresser, implying little use of resources, or on resource wasteful jewellery. And what would the poor start consuming? We cannot tell if this was basic local food, or exotic food, or more private transportation or leisure consumption.

Criticism 1: BI is not likely to contribute to degrowth and if it was, it cannot be sustained

My argument is that degrowth policy proposals directed towards the implementation of a universal unconditional BI might not clearly entail a transition towards a degrowth society. BI is likely to be the promoter of a societal change whose final outcomes are very unclear and depending upon several variables.

The literature shows that it is not clear if total employment will increase or not, neither if more frugal consumption will occur. In terms of employment the final outcome will result anywhere between one extreme situation where both net payers and net beneficiaries after BI do not change their level of employment (simply, net payers will be poorer and net beneficiaries richer) and the other where they do not change their income (so that net beneficiaries will work less while net payers will work more).

1. In the former total hours worked remain the same, with all net beneficiaries from BI getting a higher income, and all net payers getting a lower income. Net beneficiaries will not be willing to enjoy more leisure time while net payers will not be willing to sacrifice leisure time for work in order to earn the income they have lost.
2. In the latter case all net beneficiaries from BI would decide to maintain an equal level of income, thus working less hours⁵. All net payers for BI would have to work more hours in order to maintain their previous levels of income.

Moreover, within these two extremes, there can be two further extreme combinations, that could result in either more or less total income and more or less total worked hours, depending on the preferences of those who pay and of those who benefit.

Two further examples of what could occur are:

3. all net beneficiaries for BI might decide to maintain their previous income and work less, but all net payers might simply decide not to increase their paid-work hours and do with a lower income. In turn, this combination would decrease the tax-base representing a problem on how to keep financing BI policies (i.e. this could be done via increased public debt, via privatizations or via cuts in public spending)
4. all net beneficiaries might choose to maintain their jobs and receive a greater income while all net payers might also decide to work more in order to maintain their previous income: this would increase total worked hours further improving the tax-base and guarantee the sustainability of the BI policy.

	Net payer for BI	
Net beneficiary of BI	Maintain employment level, less income	Maintain income, work more
Maintain employment level, more income	Same hours worked, tax-base is maintained and BI can be sustained (Case 1)	More hours worked in total, likely GDP growth, BI can be sustained.
Maintain income, Work less	Less hours worked in total, tax base decreases, how to maintain BI policy?	Less hours worked in total, but tax base is maintained. BI can be sustained (Case 2)

Table 1: scenarios with BI effects on total paid-work hours

⁵ This extreme situation is one where the labour supply curve is extremely rigid (so that no wage incentive will contribute to put the former employed back in the labour market) and where there is a perfect substitutability between labour and capital (so that more capital will be employed to substitute for reduced labour)

The matrix above shows the four possible combinations. The top-left and bottom-right are the two extreme ones, which represent a zero-sum game in terms of tax-base being maintained (and resulting only in a more equitable income distribution that would not entail a degrowth in GDP). Moreover, in the bottom-right combination total worked hours are assumed to decrease because those who will work more (net payers of BI) are likely to have a higher per/hour wage than those who will work less (beneficiaries of BI). This combination would not entail degrowth in GDP, but only in worked hours, and a capitalization of the economic system to compensate for the decreased labour supply. The bottom-left and top-right combinations represent cases 3 and 4 respectively. While case 3 can be seen as the only degrowth-plausible scenario (but with problems on how to sustain in the long-run the BI policy) case 4 represents the outcome laying more far apart from a degrowth society -and the one most often depicted in the literature review above.

One conclusion is that the beast cannot be killed with the same weapon that has made the beast grow so large.

BI is a very efficient policy with minimal control and managing costs⁶, it is also socially desirable and will surely improve the quality of paid-work, foment a just society and pursue individual autonomy in a market-based society; van der Veen and van Parijs's essay "A capitalist road to communism" is perhaps the best way to summarize what BI does. However, from a degrowth perspective, it is highly unlikely that BI could be sustained in a society characterized by economic contraction.

Criticism 2: BI is based on a system which reinforces the prevalence of the monetary domain. From the degrowth perspective, it makes little sense to aim for more employment (and in fact, many policy proposals target a reduction in working hours, see for instance Ashford and Kallis (2013)). If socially sustainable degrowth is different from an economic recession is because employment, market exchange and monetary valuation all cease to play such a relevant role in society. Moreover, it is when monetary values become so important that they stand as a measure of society's well-being (either of GDP or of per capita income) that an economic contraction is either a problem or inconceivable (as expressed by mainstream criticisms against degrowth). Real policies should aim for strong sustainability (Ott, (2012) proposes 4 variants of degrowth and argues that a relevant one is the pursue of ecological sustainability) while the role attributed to GDP should become irrelevant (van Den Bergh, 2011); an escape from the economy is the essence of degrowth (Fourier, 2008); a precursor of the *decroissance* movement in France was the MAUSS (Movement Against Utilitarianism in Social Sciences) which is in contradiction with the utilitarian justification of BI based on Rawlsian concept of social justice. If an aim for the degrowth movement is to get rid of economic imperialism, then BI has very little, if anything, to do. Rather, it might work in the opposite direction, reinforcing the value of money in our societies and hence implicitly recognising the failure of all that has been said and written against the *economie*, against the *homo oeconomicus* rationality.

It might even become a form of reductionism of life value into monetary quantities. Just to give a couple of examples insurance companies are already calculating premiums based on the value of an insured's life. Or the case of Lawrence Summer who, when chief economist

⁶ However, we also need to look at those who will pay the BI. Tax evasion and capital outflows will increase, so that BI might not entirely decrease the bureaucratic apparatus, more tax control will be required.

of the World Bank, wrote his infamous memo (“Let them eat pollution”, *The Economist*, 1992), in which he gave different values to human lives based on the foregone earnings in case of death for pollution⁷. I think that BI would reinforce even further similar assumptions based on quantifying the value of human lives. It is not by chance that some right wing libertarians -as Milton Friedman was- are after the implementation of BI policies: not only because they allow for Hayek's principles of individual liberty and freedom, but also because they manage civil rights in monetary terms, and contribute to reinforce the monetary domination of our capitalist societies. Promoters of BI who feel an affinity with degrowth should be very wary of this alliance with the right-wing libertarians⁸. In real terms, all those people who do not have a job and do not receive any social security benefit, and whose needs are satisfied without money, will now have an incentive to do things with money.

Criticism 3: BI might contribute to individualism and consumerism.

An inherent advantage for satisfying needs without money is the solidarity that emerges among people and the networks for real social change that are created. Far from being a defence of the implicit benefits of economic crises, or the unjust distribution of resources for which too many people are forced to live aside of the market mechanism, this statement is rather to say that in a society whose members have the security of a BI nothing can be said with respect to how mutual aid relationships will evolve. Rather, the defenders of BI justify it in terms of strengthening individual autonomy, and not as a measure that will enhance degrowth values such as conviviality and disinterested reciprocity. Of course, having disposable income will enhance buying more presents and the spirit of the gift, but this is based on an individualistic policy which, just as likely, might enhance among other individuals the greed for money or foment the competition for status consumption. Also, mass consumption has originated from the intuition of Henri Ford to allow his workers an income beyond the minimum for survival; in a context of permanent crisis where unemployment level might often be at double-digit, BI could do just the same in order to maintain aggregate demand and mass consumption. It is not clear what sort of cultural values will evolve in the long run, but ensuring that all citizen have an adequate income to spend, will be seen as a tremendous marketing potential for capitalist corporations; there is evidence since at least half a century of the perverse subliminal tactics employed by marketing departments (Packard, 1957): how to be sure that these manipulative techniques, combined with the reach of new ICT such as the internet or smart phones, and that have exponentially improved marketing potentialities will not jeopardize all the benefits of BI?

Criticism 4: BI is only partially for an autonomous society.

The philosophical justification for BI is based on justice and individual freedom -for

⁷ His case, just to mention but not relevant for this thesis, was to move dirty industries and toxic industrial waste to economically poorer communities.

⁸ This observation implies that as degrowth theory develops, its spectrum gets broader, and -similarly to Ott (2012) who identifies different variants of degrowth and discusses the democratic implications of each- there is a need to move towards the definition of different currents of degrowth politics. The case for BI and degrowth is an exemplary one, in fact it stands at one extreme of this degrowth spectrum -a BI motto could be that of “no life without money”- while at the other end of the spectrum we can identify streams such as that of life without money (Nelson and Timmerman, 2011), or the focus on the values behind the gift economy (the MAUSS movement is a recall on Marcel Mauss's work on the spirit of the gift).

instance van Parijs (2009) defends it as the autonomous sphere that stand as a third pole between the market and the government. Paradoxically, I see the beneficiary of BI as rightfully dependent, as if it was a child, on both the government and the market: although BI allows a citizen to be autonomous in the life choices she can make, there will be a primary dependence of citizenship on the institutions that allow for its existence. BI allows autonomy only if the State and capitalism are supposed to last indefinitely. If, on the other hand, new forms of democracy and post-capitalism are seen as necessary stages for the transition, then the durability of BI and the citizen's autonomy that it enhances should be reconsidered.

Contrasting van Parijs's political ecology vision of BI as a third sphere, I recall a more realistic third sphere, that of the commons, who have been in existence since before the modern State and capitalism were created. Operationally, if a community is able to manage a common successfully, a sort of basic income will be returned by the common fund to its participants. An important issue is to ensure basic access to communal funds rather than basic monetary income⁹. This is not the case to fully analyse the potentialities of the commons, simply to acknowledge that they form part of degrowth policy and research proposals. To what extent proposals for BI stand in opposition to policies for accessing the commons?

Criticism 5: all human societies have to perform some work to live-by.

From an anthropological perspective a society offering BI to its citizens would be an exception in history. A society where some of the population can live with a BI is due to others paying for it, but this is only in part, the rest is due to how modern societies are capable, through technological means -often harmful- to over-exploit natural resources. In this way the work performed by one person can satisfy the needs of many more than one¹⁰. In traditional societies all members contribute with some meaningful work to sustain the community; anthropologists have observed that in hunter-gatherer societies (which has been the most common way in human history) children as young as the age of 3 are already able to provide some food for themselves.

It could be argued that these type of societies enjoying “nature gifts” collected through meaningful work, not at all comparable to the alienating jobs that workers in industrial societies have to fulfil in order to sustain their families lives. BI could therefore resemble a gift, but the nature of this gift is not a natural one, rather it is based on the exploitation of nature and, most important, it does not prevent the perpetuation of alienation in the workplace. Although there exists a right to be lazy (Lafargue, 1883) which stands against the capitalist mode of production, workers' exploitation and waged labour and which BI would chiefly enhance, I contrast that not nature overexploitation / workers alienation neither absolute laziness are laws of nature. In respect to this, BI can be seen only as a marginal degrowth proposal, contextual within capitalism but not radical enough.

⁹ A fund if correctly managed, can be a source of income. Managing a fund in order to get an income flow

can provide meaningfulness to its participants, while simply receiving a monetary flow, might have different implications in terms of meaningfulness and probably suppose certain alienation.

¹⁰The clearest example comes from primary production, where technology and cheap energy have allowed that, in post-industrial societies, less than 5% of the workforce can produce the food for the rest of society. On the one hand this has been possible through the expansion of skills and know-how, on the other hand this is also due to the over exploitation of natural resources at unsustainable levels

Criticism 6: BI needs to beware of population growth

Some of the proposals for a unconditional BI limit its universality only to those citizens older than 18 years. In order to avoid further population growth, this is more plausible than BI given allowed since a baby's birth because those families seeking extra income from having more children would push population up.

However, even if applied only to the adult population, the freed time will likely be devoted to child raising, making the choice to have a baby relatively more easy.

4. Discussion: should we dismiss BI as a degrowth policy proposal?

The literature review and the criticisms above attempt at highlighting the possible relationships between BI and degrowth, understood in the broad sense. Attention on degrowth in natural resource consumption and economic downscaling have shown that BI would not be an adequate policy.

One intermediate question would be why degrowth policy proposals are putting so much attention on BI¹¹? Probably because socially sustainability is more urgent than ever: together with the rise of neoliberal capitalism social inequalities have exacerbated; the spread between the highest and the lowest wage in most corporations is constantly spreading, growth is good mainly for the rich.

But it has been shown that particularly good for the rich has been the present economic crisis. Following the *decroissance* movement, degrowth theory has been picking up since its first conference in 2008, a very recent time, not older than the economic crisis which is still enduring. BI is in fact an easy and temporary solution to the present injustice localized in post-industrial societies. Far easier to implement than guaranteeing universal access to the commons or convincing governments that we can prosper without growth. And far more pragmatic.

I do not think proposals for BI should be dismissed completely. It is likely that the present crisis will endure further. There is evidence that this crisis is due to our approaching to peak oil, expressed in high oil prices (for an analysis, see Douthwaite, 2012). Likely, economic cycles will face a downturn trend (short booms followed by long recessions) and BI could be one policy to level this trend: aggregate demand and employment would improve which, in periods of unsustainable degrowth, are not bad signs¹². BI would be a second-best solution and, as seen, should be short-lived -or growth in employment will jump-start economic growth again and reinforce exploitation of natural resources and what I would define "unconditional economicism".

BI should be a temporary strategy for the time being, meanwhile, society should get ready for the strategic exodus towards nowtopia (Carlsson and Manning 2010) -an utopian reality represented by urban activists that free their time from the labour market and dedicate to urban gardening, bicycle culture and to the open-source community). The radical thought of Ivan Illich (1977) should be reminded: referring to the subsistence farmer who is able to build his own house, he wrote "*The useful unemployment of the poor without a paid job is sacrificed to the expansion of the labour market*" (p.27); in this situation, a real autonomy arises, for the farmer needs no government to pay him a BI, nor the money to pay for most

¹¹ See for instance the protagonism of BI politics in the degrowth magazine <http://en.demagazine.eu/> (accessed March 14th 2014)

¹² A critical scrutiny of job guarantee (JG), with the State functioning as an employer of last resource can be seen as a way to level off economic cycles. An analysis of this goes beyond the scope of this paper. However, Basic Income Studies has devoted a special issue on BI vs. JG

of the construction materials and for labour which, in traditional communities, is supplied by mutual aid in the community.

This is only an example of where a post-peak-oil degrowth society could lead, being the bottom-line that BI should be only seen as a provisional policy, adequate for a time of unwanted degrowth but unsustainable in the long-run. Degrowth politics should have other priorities for implementing a sustainable societal transition.

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