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The Impact of Guaranteed Income on Political Participation

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THE IMPACT OF GUARANTEED INCOME ON POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

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ABSTRACT

This three-paper dissertation examines the impact of guaranteed income (GI) and cash transfer (CT) programs on political participation, aiming to contribute to understanding how social policies can shape civic engagement. The first paper provides a comprehensive literature review on GI and CT programs, focusing on their potential effects on political participation. By analyzing existing studies, this paper identifies key findings and gaps in the literature, setting the stage for further empirical investigation. The second paper develops and tests a new instrument called the Brief Political Participation Scale (BPPS), designed to measure political participation concisely and reliably. The third paper presents an experimental study comparing political participation rates between a treatment group receiving a monthly GI of $500 for 24 months and a control group with no intervention. The study employs the BPPS to measure political participation, revealing the effects of GI on political engagement. By comparing the treatment and control groups, this paper provides valuable insights into the potential of GI programs to influence political participation and attempts to address the research gaps identified in the literature review. This dissertation contributes to understanding the relationship between GI and CT programs and political participation. By examining the existing literature, developing a new measurement tool, and conducting an empirical study, this research comprehensively analyzes how income-based social policies can shape political engagement. It offers implications for researchers, policymakers, and practitioners seeking to enhance political participation within their communities.

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INTRODUCTION

Throughout history, many social groups in America have faced oppressive systemic tactics and disenfranchisement to participate in politics. Political participation entails influencing government action and social change through voting, contributing time and money to political causes, contacting a public official, attending a rally or demonstration, assisting others in participating in politics, joining boycotts, signing petitions, and learning about the political process (Brady et al., 1995; Putnam, 2000; Theocharis & van Deth, 2017). Women and Black, Hispanic, Asian, and Native groups (hereafter mentioned as people of color when discussing the shared experience of those four racial groups) waited centuries longer than their white male counterparts to have legal protections allowing them to vote and participate in politics.

Since gaining those rights from the late 1800s throughout the 1900s, these minoritized groups have yet to have an equitable political experience. For example, women and people of color have had their ability to vote and influence politics restricted, including facing criminal prosecution and other forms of backlash for trying to participate (Laroche, 2022). Strict voting requirements and criminalizing public demonstrations are formal, oppressive systemic tactics to dissuade participation. While less formal discrimination has also dissuaded participation, such as violence, social or familial censure, or threat of ostracization from community or religious groups (Chawla et al., 2017). These and other non-hegemonic social groups garner disproportionately less representation and vote at lower rates than the dominant group of older affluent white males. These oppressed groups also face greater poverty rates, economic disparity, and less access to the political system. These gaps continue to widen (Brady et al., 1995; Morduch & Siwicki, 2017; Wray-Lake et al., 2020).

In the decades following the civil rights movement and the passing of the Voting Rights Act (VRA) of 1965, affluent white males in power have used extensive tactics to influence politics and erode democracy in the US (Keyssar, 2009; Piven & Cloward, 2000; Abramovitz et al., 2019). These elites do so by supporting voter suppression and gerrymandering to oppress political power largely in communities of color. Supreme court decisions in 2010 (Citizen's United v Federal Election Commission) and 2013 (Shelby County v Holder), and 2019 (Rucho v Common Cause) removed caps on corporate political spending. They also removed protections from voter suppression and gerrymandering. The 2010 decision removed limits on corporate spending in politics and created "dark money groups," non-profit organizations that spend money on political campaigns without disclosing the donors (Open Secrets, 2021). The 2013 decision dismantled protections from the VRA of 1965 and proceeded with at least 42 restrictive voting laws (such as strict ID requirements) in 21 states (Brennen Center, 2022). The 2019 decision ruled that gerrymandering for party advantage cannot be challenged in federal courts, again removing protections from corruption in the political system (Kirschenbaum & Li, 2021). These changes leave historically oppressed groups vulnerable to further minimization in political decision-making.

When power is concentrated in the hands of the wealthy few (sometimes considered an oligarchy), their interests are prioritized. The wealthy use their power to enact business tax breaks and securities to further their wealth. These wealth-seeking ventures come at the cost of pivotal social support for most Americans, like affordable housing, livable wages, and access to education and healthcare. People contribute to a political and economic system not designed for their benefit, leaving them struggling to afford living costs, let alone prosper.

Changes in the political system are disproportionately influenced by the affluent. A persistent pattern of political policies further disadvantages minoritized groups, such as supporting restrictive voting laws and practices. Further, access to the political system, including voting, has been restricted using disenfranchisement tactics, including reducing the number of polling places in poorer communities and increasing identification barriers (Keyssar, 2000).

Despite these issues, women surpassed men in voter registration and voting rates in the late 1990s, and Black voters participated at disproportionately higher rates than whites in the 2008 and 2012 general elections, though voting rates diminished slightly in subsequent election cycles (Pew Research Center, 2020; Roper Center, 2020). Although 66.4% of eligible white voters voted in 2020 compared to 60.2% of Black voters, 59.5% of Latinx voters and 59.3% of Asian American voters participated in the same year (US Census Bureau, 2020). Further, reports show men contributed 64.5% of campaign contribution funds in 2020, nearly double that of women (35.5%; Open Secrets, 2021). Overall, the top 1% of campaign donors in 2020 gave $1.2 billion, compared to the bottom 50% of donors who combined gave $968 million (Center for Responsive Politics, n.d.). Beyond voting, white Americans also reported engaging in political activism, contributing to campaigns, and discussing politics in their social circles at higher rates than Black, Latin, and Asian Americans (Krogstad & Noe-Bustamante, 2021).

The wealthy have substantial resources (i.e., money, knowledge, and experience) and utilize those assets to influence change in the political landscape. For example, a group of wealthy businessmen and politicians established the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC) in 1975, intending to primarily influence state-level policymaking (Center for Media and Democracy, 2021). ALEC has produced and promoted over 1,000 model legislation bills that widely serve to dismantle worker rights and reduce economic and social responsibility for

corporations and the wealthy, hindering marginalized groups' economic and social mobility (Source Watch, n.d.; Tsounta et al., 2015).

Women and people of color face social and economic disadvantages that have prolonged disparities in political participation in the US. Governments must find ways to redistribute social, economic, and political power. Cash transfer (CT) programs, which provide money to targeted groups or people in a designated region, may aid in attenuating some social and economic disadvantages. The programs vary in purpose and execution. Some are designed as poverty reduction or prevention measures, typically provided to people with limited resources (Gonzalez & Bidadanure, 2020). Besides how widespread the program is, other factors to note in the design of programs include [1] what qualifies a person to receive the transfer, [2] if the funds are restricted to specified products or can be spent freely, and [3] how consistently the payments will occur.

In the 1960s, the US considered enacting a guaranteed annual income (GAI; also called a universal basic income, basic income, or guaranteed income), consistent unrestricted funds to help provide economic security and reduce poverty, primarily to low-income families. Milton Friedman and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. were two proponents of a GAI in the 1960s, although for different reasons. Dr. King argued that poverty came from a lack of power and dignity, not just income, and by providing an economic floor through a GAI, individuals would maintain some power and dignity regardless of their employment status or income level (Widerquist, 2005). Friedman agreed that GAI might reduce poverty but supported unrestricted cash payments to low-income families to replace the existing welfare system, streamlining the delivery of resources and minimizing government bureaucracy (Widerquist, 2005). A GAI was considered for decades following its increased interest in the 60s, but no attempts succeeded in

implementing one in the US. Following these failures, the government expanded social support

services through Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and Supplemental Security

income (SSI). TANF is a national cash assistance program to support low-income families with

children. TANF is federally funded but is administered at the state level. Therefore, eligibility

criteria, benefit amounts, and program structure vary significantly among the programs, although

many include work requirements and time limits on assistance (US Government, n.d.). SSI is

another robust CT program in which the federal government provides cash benefits to aged and

disabled folks that have limited resources to aid in them meeting their basic needs like food,

clothing, and shelter (US Government Benefits, 2023).

   As described above, TANF and SSI are more restrictive than GAI and have not reduced

poverty, streamlined supportive services, or reduced government bureaucracy since their

inception. People may fare better economically with greater autonomy in spending their financial

transfers. In turn, improved economic factors are associated with increased political

participation. Providing consistent, unrestricted cash transfers (i.e., a guaranteed income) could

free individuals to engage in political activities they otherwise would not.

Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

   The relationship between guaranteed income and political participation has become an

important and novel topic in contemporary scholarship. This paper examines this relationship

with an integrative framework, drawing on several theories: the Resource Model of Political

Participation (RMPP) (Brady et al., 1995), the Civic Voluntarism Model (CVM) (Verba et al.,

1995), the concept of scarcity proposed by Mullainathan and Shafir (2013), and the theory of

resource mobilization (Tarrow, 1994). These interrelated frameworks help illuminate the

underlying mechanisms through which guaranteed income may influence political participation,

considering resource distribution, psychological engagement, cognitive bandwidth, social networks, and individual decision-making processes. By synthesizing these perspectives, this theoretical frame outlines a nuanced understanding of the potential effects of guaranteed income on political engagement.

The Resource Model of Political Participation (RMPP) explains that having more resources, namely money, time, and civic skills, increases political participation. These resources' availability and distribution help explain variations in political engagement across different socio-economic groups. Individuals with more resources possess the necessary means to engage in activities such as voting, campaigning, and contacting public officials. Time refers to the availability of free time that individuals can allocate to participating in political activities. Money is a crucial resource that can be used to support political organizations, campaigns, and movements. On the other hand, civic skills encompass problem-solving, communication, and organizational skills to participate in political activities effectively.

The model also highlights the role of social and institutional factors in shaping access to these resources. Factors such as education, income, and social networks can significantly influence an individual's resource availability and, consequently, their level of political engagement. The RMPP underscores the importance of addressing socio-economic inequalities to foster more inclusive and representative political participation.

Building upon the insights provided by the Resource Model of Political Participation, exploring the relationship between equality and political engagement is crucial. The Civic Voluntarism Model (CVM) posits that socio-economic inequalities and disparities in resource distribution can lead to unequal political participation, hindering the representativeness and fairness of democratic systems (Verba et al., 1995). This model emphasizes the voluntary nature

of political engagement and identifies three main factors contributing to individuals' involvement in political activities: [1] resources, [2] psychological engagement, and [3] recruitment networks.

In the CVM, resources play a pivotal role in shaping political participation, just as they do in the Resource Model. Psychological engagement refers to an individual's interest, motivation, and sense of political efficacy. According to the CVM, individuals with higher levels of psychological engagement are more likely to participate in politics. It posits that people are driven by their beliefs, values, and a sense of civic duty. The model explains that political interest, awareness, and feelings of political efficacy are critical determinants of political engagement. Recruitment networks, the third factor, encompass the social connections and organizational affiliations that provide opportunities for individuals to become involved in political activities. The model suggests that people are more likely to participate in politics when connected to networks that facilitate and encourage political engagement. These networks include family, friends, community organizations, and political parties. The Civic Voluntarism Model offers a framework for understanding the interplay of resources, psychological engagement, and recruitment networks in shaping individuals' political participation.

After examining these models, which emphasize the significance of resources, psychological engagement, and recruitment networks in shaping political participation, it is essential to delve deeper into the role of external actors in stimulating political engagement. Mobilization Theory offers a valuable perspective on how social networks, organizations, and political elites influence individuals' propensity to participate in political activities. It emphasizes that individuals are more likely to engage in political activities when mobilized or encouraged by external actors, such as political parties, interest groups, community organizations, or social connections.

Regarding resources and their impact on political participation, Mobilization Theory can provide insights into how resource availability or scarcity might influence mobilization efforts' effectiveness. For example, individuals with more resources (time, money, and civic skills) might be more responsive to mobilization attempts because they have the necessary means to participate in political activities. Conversely, individuals facing resource scarcity might be less responsive to mobilization efforts, as they may struggle to allocate time, money, or cognitive resources to political activities. Moreover, Mobilization Theory can help explain how mobilizing agents, such as political parties and interest groups, can provide resources or opportunities to individuals who might otherwise face barriers to political participation. By targeting and mobilizing underrepresented or resource-scarce groups, these agents can potentially reduce disparities in political engagement and foster a more inclusive and representative democratic system.

It is essential to consider how cognitive factors, particularly resource scarcity-related ones, might impact political participation. Mullainathan and Shafir's Scarcity Hypothesis offers an insightful perspective on the cognitive consequences of resource scarcity, which has potential implications for political engagement (2013). The experience of scarcity, including financial scarcity, consumes cognitive resources and affects decision-making. When individuals face scarcity, they tend to focus their attention on immediate needs and problems, leaving less cognitive bandwidth for other tasks and considerations. This tunneling effect may lead to suboptimal decision-making and reduced ability to plan for the future or engage in other activities. In the context of political participation, individuals experiencing resource scarcity, such as financial hardship, may have reduced cognitive capacity to allocate to political activities.

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Cognitive and income scarcity may result in lower levels of political engagement as individuals prioritize immediate needs and concerns over civic involvement.

Integrating the Resource and Civic Voluntarism models with Mobilization theory and the scarcity hypothesis creates a comprehensive understanding of how resources, psychological factors, social networks, and cognitive constraints interact to shape political participation. One mechanism that may help increase political participation among marginalized groups is supplying a periodic, long-term, unrestricted cash transfer, a guaranteed income (GI). By providing a GI, individuals may have more financial resources and stability, enabling them to allocate more time and money to political activities. Furthermore, GI may allow individuals to invest in their civic skills, such as education and training, which could enhance their ability to participate effectively in political activities.

GI could influence political participation by strengthening social networks and organizations facilitating mobilization. With consistent financial stability, individuals might be more likely to join and contribute to community organizations, interest groups, and political parties. In turn, these organizations may have increased capacity to mobilize individuals for political activities, such as voting, attending meetings, and advocating for policy changes. Further, by alleviating financial scarcity through a GI, individuals may experience less cognitive strain and have more mental bandwidth to allocate to political activities. When the burden of financial scarcity is reduced, people have a greater ability to focus on political issues, make informed decisions, and engage in political discussions and actions. Supplying a GI can improve participation by increasing the availability of resources, enhancing mobilization efforts, and reducing the cognitive burden associated with financial scarcity. Addressing these factors could

lead to a more inclusive and representative democratic system, with higher levels of political engagement across various socio-economic groups.

Purpose of the Study

This set of three papers explores the potential impact of guaranteed income (GI) or cash transfers on political participation, drawing on the theoretical frameworks outlined above. By examining these relationships, this research seeks to contribute to understanding how GI might influence political engagement and, ultimately, the inclusiveness and representativeness of democratic systems. The first paper, a comprehensive literature review, investigates existing research on the relationship between guaranteed income or cash transfers and political participation. The review will synthesize findings from various studies, highlighting how the provision of GI might influence individuals' engagement in political activities, such as voting, attending meetings, and advocating for policy changes. This paper will provide a solid foundation for subsequent empirical investigations and help identify potential gaps in the current understanding of this relationship.

The second paper focuses on developing and testing the Brief Political Participation Scale (BPPS) to measure political participation. Through exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), this paper aims to create an instrument that captures various aspects of political engagement, such as voting, contacting officials, and involvement in political organizations. The development of this scale will contribute to the field by providing researchers with a brief, cost-effective, and low-tech tool for measuring political participation. The BPPS is designed to fit constraints related to its administration with a sample from the Stockton Economic Empowerment Demonstration (SEED) project. SEED was a randomized controlled

trial testing the impact of receiving a GI on financial, physical, and emotional wellness (West et al., 2019).

The third paper presents an empirical analysis of data collected from the SEED project. Using the scale developed in the second paper (BPPS), this study will examine whether individuals who received the guaranteed income through SEED participated more in political activities compared to a control group that did not receive the GI. The study considered demographic characteristics, including race, gender, income level, and education level, providing additional analyses comparing individuals by those characteristics. The study also explores other relationships between demographic characteristics and participation across the sample. By leveraging data from a randomized controlled trial, this paper seeks to provide valuable insights into the potential causal impact of GI on political participation.

Overall, these three papers aim to advance knowledge on the relationship between guaranteed income and political participation, building on established theoretical frameworks and employing rigorous empirical methodologies. By exploring this relationship, this research hopes to contribute to the discussion on the role of GI in fostering more inclusive and representative democratic systems.

CHAPTER I

A LITERATURE REVIEW OF GUARANTEED INCOME AND POLITICAL

PARTICIPATION

Abstract

This literature review examines the effects of guaranteed income (GI) and cash transfer (CT) programs on political participation. The review synthesizes and analyzes research findings from various contexts, exploring the mechanisms through which these programs influence political behavior and participation. The review used the 59 most relevant studies to highlight the complexities of the relationship between GI programs and political participation, considering factors such as economic stability, access to resources, and empowerment. By consolidating existing knowledge, this review aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the subject and lay the groundwork for future research. The findings indicate that while GI and CT programs have positively impacted political participation in some cases, the outcomes are context-dependent and may vary based on program design, implementation, and cultural factors.

Introduction

Guaranteed income (GI) programs have gained increased attention recently as a potential solution to poverty, inequality, and economic insecurity. These programs provide regular, unconditional cash payments to people to aid in alleviating poverty, reducing inequality, and ensuring a basic level of economic stability. As guaranteed income continues to gain traction in policy debates and experimental implementations, it is crucial to understand the broader societal implications of these programs, including their potential impact on political participation. Political participation is a cornerstone of democratic societies, encompassing various forms of engagement, such as voting, attending political meetings, joining interest groups, and participating in protests. A well-functioning democracy relies on its people engaging in the political process. Understanding the potential effects of GI programs on political participation can provide valuable insights into the broader implications of these policies and inform decision-making processes for policymakers considering implementing or modifying such programs.

Political Participation

Throughout history, numerous social groups in the United States have encountered oppressive systemic tactics and disenfranchisement that have hindered their political participation. Women and people of color (referring to the shared experiences of Black, Hispanic, Asian, and Native groups) have faced centuries of discrimination, delaying their legal rights to vote and participate in politics. Despite gaining these rights in the late 19th and 20th centuries, these marginalized groups have not achieved an equitable political experience. They have faced restrictions on their voting rights and political influence, encountering criminal prosecution and backlash for attempting to participate (Laroche, 2022). Formal, oppressive tactics like strict voting requirements and criminalizing public demonstrations have been used to dissuade political participation. Informal discrimination, including violence, social or familial

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censure, and the threat of ostracization from the community or religious groups, has further suppressed political engagement (Chawla et al., 2017). Consequently, these marginalized groups are underrepresented in politics and face higher poverty rates, economic disparity, and restricted access to the political system (Brady et al., 1995; Morduch & Siwicki, 2017; Wray-Lake et al., 2020).

In the wake of the civil rights movement and the Voting Rights Act (VRA) of 1965, affluent white males have employed various tactics to undermine democracy in the US (Keyssar, 2009; Piven & Cloward, 2000; Abramovitz et al., 2019). These elites support voter suppression and gerrymandering to curtail the political power of the masses. Supreme Court decisions in 2010, 2013, and 2019 have removed limits on corporate political spending, dismantled protections against voter suppression and gerrymandering, and introduced "dark money groups." (Open Secrets, 2021). These changes have left historically oppressed groups increasingly vulnerable to marginalization in political decision-making (Kirschenbaum & Li, 2021; Brennan Center, 2022).

In an oligarchic system, the interests of the wealthy few are prioritized. The rich use their power to secure tax breaks and other benefits that further their wealth at the expense of essential social support for the majority of Americans, including affordable housing, livable wages, and access to education and healthcare. Consequently, people struggle to meet basic living expenses in a political and economic system not designed for their benefit. Affluent individuals disproportionately influence changes in the political system, often supporting policies that disadvantage marginalized groups (Keyssar, 2000).

Despite these challenges, women have surpassed men in voter registration and voting rates since the late 1990s, and Black individuals voted at proportionally higher rates than whites

in the 2008 and 2012 general elections (Pew Research Center, 2020; Roper Center, 2020).

However, disparities in political activism, campaign contributions, and political discussions

remain between white Americans and people of color (US Census Bureau, 2020; Open Secrets,

2021; Center for Responsive Politics, n.d.).

The wealthy possess substantial resources and leverage them to change the political

sphere. For example, a group of affluent businessmen and politicians founded the American

Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC) in 1975 to primarily influence state-level policymaking

(Center for Media and Democracy, 2021). ALEC has produced and promoted over 1,000 model

legislation bills that broadly aim to dismantle worker rights and reduce economic and social

responsibility for corporations and the wealthy, further impeding marginalized groups' economic

and social mobility (Source Watch, n.d.; Tsounta et al., 2015).

Even when facing economic discrimination and barriers to participation, many

marginalized groups find ways to engage with the political system and influence change. These

non-hegemonic groups participate at higher rates in community-organized forms of political

participation, despite facing direct efforts to diffuse minoritized communities from organizing for

better rights (Cho et al., 2013). When certain groups are unable or disallowed to participate in

formal political activities like voting, donating money, or lobbying, they participate in alternative

ways. These people participate more often through local organizations such as community

action-oriented or religious groups (Sobolewska et al., 2015). Nonetheless, governments must

seek ways to redistribute social, economic, and political power more equitably.

Guaranteed Income (GI) and Cash Transfer (CT) Programs

Previous research on guaranteed income (GI) programs has primarily focused on their

impact on poverty alleviation, labor market participation, and subjective well-being (Marinescu,

2018). While there is a growing body of literature on guaranteed income's economic and social effects, its implications for political participation remain underexplored. Outside of Alaska's Permanent Fund Dividend, there are no active state or federal-level guaranteed income programs in the US (Patterson & City Bureau of Chicago, 2022). However, at least 47 pilot programs were identified across the US testing GI with various groups (DiBenedetto, 2022). Existing research on cash transfer (CT) programs will serve as proxies for GI programs to address this gap. Close attention will be paid to the differing features of the programs, although GI and CT programs share the key feature of providing financial assistance, generally, to low-income people. When discussed together, GI and CT programs will be referred to as "GI-like programs," with features differentiated as needed. The following subsections explain other features of GI and CT programs and the history of the programs in and outside the US.

Program Comparisons

This section examines the similarities and differences between various cash transfer programs and typical guaranteed income programs, offering a comprehensive comparison to understand their objectives, design, and potential policy development and implementation implications. There are vital differences between CT and GI programs regarding targeting, duration, and scale. The aim here is to provide valuable insights by analyzing the nuances between these approaches.

Cash transfers refer to a broader range of social welfare initiatives that provide financial assistance, primarily to vulnerable and lower-income communities. Cash transfer programs vary widely and are also referred to as unconditional (or conditional) cash transfers, basic income, human development income transfers, citizenship transfers, and citizen's dividends (Barrientos, 2013; Gonzalez & Bidadanure, 2020). GI programs are a specific form of CT program that provides regular (i.e., long-term and consistent) unconditional and unrestricted cash payments.

The GI programs typically aim to ensure basic economic stability or provide an income floor (Jain Family Institute, 2021). More broadly, CT programs are categorized by several factors, including who can receive them, how frequent the payments are, whether the money must be spent on specific services or products, and whether certain conditions must be met to maintain the benefits (Gonzalez & Bidadanure, 2020).

Programs may have their receipt be *conditional or unconditional*. Conditional refers to individuals being required to meet a condition to qualify for the program (or keep receiving it), such as having a job, attending health checkups, or living in a certain area (Fiszbein et al., 2009). CT programs may or may not *restrict* what recipients must purchase with the funds. Programs like the US electronic benefits transfer (EBT) system, including SNAP, do not provide cash but conditional electronic funds. The funds are transferred to a debit-like card which must be spent on qualifying food items and cannot be withdrawn as cash.

Further, they can be *selective or universal* in how many people in a group or population receive the funds. Also, the funds may be transferred as a *once-off and irregular payment or as recurring long- or short-term payments*. Short-term payments are commonly supplied to people in disaster relief situations, such as displacement due to a tornado or flooding damage (Pega et al., 2017). Longer-term recurring payments from CTs may be *selective,* which only select perpetually vulnerable groups to qualify, such as the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) program. SSI is a conditional and selective program for people who are older or disabled with low income and assets, which provides long-term unrestricted cash benefits to those who qualify (Social Security Administration, 2023). Universal programs target all people in a population, typically in the form of a dividend from a resource in a specific region. When targeting all or most of a population, the transfers often come as one or a series of short-lived, one-time

payments. One-time and irregularly scheduled payments are given to attenuate economic crises, such as the funds released through the Coronavirus Relief Fund, part of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act (US Treasury Department, 2022).

GI programs are typically designed with consistent long-term payments with no restriction on how they must be spent. They also typically have little to no conditions to retain the benefits and are often theorized as near universal in distribution (Marinescu, 2018). The only current state-level GI program, the Alaska Permanent Fund Dividend, is near-universal, although since most GI programs are localized pilots, they are selective, focusing on relatively small samples of lower-income and vulnerable groups (Marinescu, 2018; Hoynes, 2019).

GI and CT programs in the United States

Two GI programs in the US, the Alaska Permanent Fund Dividend (APFD) and the Eastern Band of Cherokees' casino dividend, were implemented in 1982 and 1996, respectively. Alaska's PFD is paid for with surplus revenue from the state's oil and gas revenues through a sovereign wealth fund (Alaska Revenue Department, 2021). Alaskan citizens, resident aliens, refugees, and asylees over 18 receive a state-wide dividend of about $1600 annually. The Eastern Band of Cherokees supplies the community with a guaranteed income of about $4700 annually through shared casino revenues (Akee et al., 2018). These were implemented as compensation programs to mitigate the burden of profit-making industries in the regions rather than to impact poverty or wellness.

The United States has recently seen a resurgence of interest in longer-term, less conditional, and more universal CT programs. Organizations like the Jain Family Institute (JFI), the Economic Security Project (ESP), and Mayors for a Guaranteed Income (MGI) have invested in and supported GI pilot programs in the U.S. (Gonzalez & Bidadanure, 2020). Further, Stanford's Basic Income Lab and The University of Pennsylvania's Center for Guaranteed

Income Research (CGIR) utilize funding from private and public sources to track and evaluate how receiving a GI impacts individuals and communities (Stanford's BIL, 2021; Center for GI Research, 2021). CGIR has evaluated over thirty cash transfer pilot studies since its inception in 2021.

Two examples of modern GI experiments include the Stockton Economic Empowerment Demonstration (SEED) and Magnolia Mother's Trust. SEED was a pilot program launched in February 2019 in Stockton, California. The program provided 131 randomly selected residents with a guaranteed income of $500 per month for 24 months, with no conditions or work requirements attached. SEED aimed to assess the potential impacts of a guaranteed income on various aspects of recipients' lives, including financial stability, health, and well-being. Findings from the SEED pilot indicated positive outcomes, such as improved mental health, increased employment, and reduced financial stress among recipients (West & Castro, 2023). The Magnolia Mother's Trust pilot launched in 2018 in Jackson, Mississippi, and provided 80 low-income African American mothers living in public housing with a guaranteed income of $1,000 per month for 12 months. Preliminary findings showed improved mental health, greater autonomy, increased financial stability, and enhanced access to education and job training, although final results are yet to be published (Magnolia Mother's Trust, 2021).

Several national-level CT programs have been implemented in the US in recent decades. The largest CT program is the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), an electronic benefit to aid people with low income or low assets to afford food (Food and Nutrition Service, 2023). About 12% of the US population (38 million) receive SNAP annually (Food and Nutrition Service, 2023). The funds may not be withdrawn and can only be spent on certain food items. Another type of CT program in the US is unemployment or reemployment assistance

benefits. These benefits vary by state but are generally designed to provide a bridge of funds while recipients are in between jobs.

Cash transfers gained recognition in a new light at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. The pandemic and proceeding endemic left many in an economically precarious circumstance. One relief program added at the end of 2020 was the Pandemic-EBT (P-EBT). This program expanded SNAP benefits by supplying extra funds to parents of children who would usually get free or reduced lunch in school but were at home due to pandemic lockdowns. Alongside relief programs like P-EBT, the US deployed three economic impact cash transfers to many residents in 2020 and 2021 (CARES Act in March 2020, Consolidated Appropriations Act in December 2020, & American Rescue Plan Act in 2021).

Seattle implemented the Democracy Voucher program, a CT program starting in 2015, which provided annual funds for constituents to allocate to city-level political candidates. The program did not provide direct cash but rather allowed voters to submit whom they would like to receive their support. Then, the city disburses the funds to the candidates. The program helped over 135,000 constituents allocate $3.4 million ($25 each) to candidates in 2021 (City of Seattle, 2022).

GI and CT programs outside the US

Starting in the 1980s, significant shifts in political leadership and advances in democracy, especially in the Global South (Latin America, Africa, Asian, and Oceania), brought a wave of GI-like programs (Hunter & Sugiyama, 2014). Through the 2000s, countries including Finland, Brazil, Canada, and Kenya employed GI programs and pilots. Ecuador, Argentina, Honduras, Pakistan, and other regions employed CT programs of varying scales (Pega et al., 2017). Cash transfer programs have been deployed outside the United States in various ways and settings. Programs are often aimed at supporting those in poverty and those with children. Some of the

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most well-established programs, like those in Brazil, Mexico, and Pakistan, served millions of recipients each. The following outlines five GI programs and pilots, then details varying CT programs outside the US.

The GiveDirectly program in Kenya is a non-governmental initiative that provides unrestricted, unconditional, monthly guaranteed income payments. The program conducted a short-term test of supplying approximately $22 monthly GI to low-income people in rural Kenya. Preliminary findings suggested that the payments reduced poverty, increased investments, and improved financial stability for its recipients (Haushofer & Shapiro, 2016). In 2016, Give Directly launched a long-term GI program that provides payments to over 20,000 Kenyans. The long-term program is ongoing and sets to provide funding to recipients through 2028.

Finland's Basic Income Experiment was a government-backed pilot program conducted in 2017 and 2018. The program provided 2,000 randomly selected unemployed individuals with a guaranteed monthly income of approximately $670 for two years. The individuals were given the same amount of monthly funds offered with unemployment insurance but removed all conditions for individuals receiving the funds (Hirvonen, 2022). The experiment concluded that basic income improved well-being, slightly increased time employed, and had a positive perception from its participants (Kangas et al., 2019).

Ontario's Basic Income Pilot was a three-year initiative launched in 2017 in three cities in the Canadian province of Ontario. The program provided a GI to eligible low-income individuals and couples, with a maximum annual payment of approximately $13,500 for individuals and approximately $19,000 for couples. The pilot was prematurely canceled in 2018 due to a change in government, but preliminary findings reported improved financial stability, enhanced well-being, and greater access to education and job opportunities (Mendelson, 2019).

The Renda Basica de Cidadania (RBC) program in Marica, Brazil, has been considered one of the largest basic income programs (Araújo, 2021). The program is an unconditional, wide-reaching, recurring cash transfer (i.e., GI or BI) subsidized by local gas and oil revenues. The RBC program started in 2015, providing monthly transfers to 25% of Marica residents, primarily low-income citizens. The transfers are paid the equivalent of $32 monthly in a local currency (Mumbucas) rather than the national currency (Brazilian Real). While this is somewhat restrictive, a study of recipients of Mumbucas showed little to no impact on their spending habits since the currency is widely accepted in the region. Further, the program increased local economic activity, reduced poverty, and enhanced social cohesion (Araújo, 2021).

An unconditional GI-like program, the Benazir Income Support Program (BISP) of Pakistan, was designed to empower women, especially those in poverty (Tunio et al., 2020). The program reached over 5 million women from 2008 to 2018, providing cash in rural and developing areas. The program improved women's socioeconomic well-being and mobility (Iqbal et al., 2020).

Brazil's Programa Bolsa Familia (PBF) is an unrestricted, widespread, selective conditional CT program that provides recurring payments to qualifying parents and pregnant women. The program provided funds to lower-income families who met education and health-related expectations, like assuring children attended school. The program reached over 11 million households and over 40 million individuals. The program required its recipients to have their children attend school and health check-ups regularly (including receiving vaccines) to receive the monthly "human capacity development grant" (Sugiyama, 2016). The PBF recipients also had to self-report their income, verifying it was below a certain amount, and had proper identification for themselves and their children. There was an additional condition: pregnant

recipients attend prenatal health checks and "should breastfeed their infant" (Sugiyama, 2016). While some requirements were restrictive, the program provided a wide-cast economic supplement reaching approximately a quarter of Brazil's population (Sugiyama, 2016). The program ran from 2004 to 2022. In 2022, the program was replaced by Brazil Aid, a similar program that the government claims will "bring four times the value [PBF] brought." (Brazilian Information Services, 2022) Although, as of this writing, no extensive data has been provided on the impact of the Brazil Aid program.

The Honduran PRAF program was a conditional CT program from 2000 to 2005. The PRAF was designed to "increase investment in human capital" for families and was randomly assigned to be administered in 40 of the 70 poorest municipalities in Honduras (Linos, 2013). The program, like Brazil's PBF, required regular school attendance and health visits for the children of recipients. Children receiving the benefits were 8% more likely to enroll in school and 3% less likely to work (Galiani & McEwan, 2013).

One of Mexico's largest social programs, Prospera (formerly Oportunidades), was Latin America's second-largest conditional CT program (behind PBF). Like PBF, the program aimed to improve health and education outcomes for lower-income children. Although Prospera specifically focused on improving nutrition for children, too (López García, 2018). The program started in 1994 and served 7 million households or over 24 million people. The program is highly conditional and has recipients evaluated for eligibility every two months, in which transfers are withdrawn if the conditions are unmet (López García, 2018). The program has positively impacted women's decision-making power in the household, improved maternal and child health, reduced poverty, and increased educational enrollment and attendance (Behrman et al., 2011).

Poverty relief programs in Argentina and Ecuador in the early 2000s were established for unemployed and low-income families. Argentina's programs came about after the political crisis of 2001, which saw five different presidents in two weeks, followed by continued political turmoil and poverty rates higher than 25% in some areas (Casas, 2020). The Argentinian government deployed monthly social assistance transfers to individuals, although there was controversy over how funds were disbursed to different areas (Casas, 2020). The Bono de Desarrollo Humano (BDH) in Ecuador also started around the same time in 2003. BDH was a conditional CT program that served over two million people yearly (Winters, 2010). Again, there was some controversy about how the funds were disbursed. There are claims that regions that supported specific candidates received less funds than others (Ponce & Curvale, 2020).

A large selective CT pilot program in Tanzania provided funds to about 1700 households from 2010 to 2012. The conditions for qualifying for the pilot program included living in one of 80 eligible villages in three regions of Tanzania and having a person under 18 or over 60 living in the household. Children under 18 and adults over 60 must also fulfill school and health visit conditions. Children under five must attend two health visits yearly (those under two years must attend six per year, and elders once a year). Children of school age must maintain an 80 percent attendance rate at school (Evans et al., 2019).

Another program, the Unconditional Child Benefit (UCB), started in 2015 in Poland. The "generous" monthly CT is sent to all families with two or more children under 18 and all low-income families with children with increased payments for families with disabled children (Gromadzki et al., 2022). The Polish government recently announced a similar program starting in 2022, called a "family welfare capital" scheme, again giving benefits to individuals having children beyond their first-born. The government advertised the policy as directly focused on

"improving Poland's country-wide low birthrate" rather than an explicit economic assistance program (Gromadzki et al., 2022).

Purpose of the Review

This literature review was conducted to contribute to the ongoing debate about guaranteed income programs and their potential societal effects. The main research question guiding this literature review was: "What is the impact of guaranteed income programs on political participation?" The review aims to synthesize findings from various studies, highlighting the extent to which the provision of GI-like programs might influence individuals' engagement in political activities, such as voting, attending meetings, and advocating for policy changes. This review considered theoretical and conceptual links between the programs and participation, such as education and socioeconomic status. The scope of the review encompasses various types of GI-like programs and various political participation outcomes.

Methods

Search Strategy

The literature review deployed a broad search strategy using two searches. The first focused on the relationship between cash transfer programs and political participation (S1 from here forward), and the second on other factors that impact political participation (S2 from here forward). Both searches used the following databases: Academic Search Complete, CINAHL, ERIC, Proquest, PsychInfo, Pubmed, Scopus, Web of Science, Taylor and Francis Online, Cochrane Collaborative, UTK's OneSearch, and Google Scholar. As recommended by an analysis of Google Scholar searches, only the first 200 results of the searches were included in the review (Haddaway et al., 2015). The searches focused on articles published in English from 1992 to 2022 and included grey literature like working papers and reports.

The first search looked to capture works on GI-like programs and their relationship with political participation. S1 included three terms, each related to political participation and guaranteed income. The Boolean logic for S1 is represented here:

("basic income" OR "cash transfer program" OR "guaranteed income") AND ("political engagement" OR "political participation" OR "voting")

The second search looked to identify factors that improve, change, or increase political participation. S2 combined an adjective and a topic term. The Boolean logic for S2 is represented here:

("changing political engagement" OR "changing political participation" OR "increasing political engagement" OR "increasing political participation" OR "improving political engagement" OR "improving political participation" OR "increase voting" OR "improve voting" OR "change voting")

Study Selection and Inclusion Criteria

After compiling a list of potentially relevant articles, the following inclusion criteria were applied to select studies for the review:

1. The study investigates the relationship between GI or CT programs and political participation outcomes.

2. The study focuses on the impact of GI or CT programs on related outcomes, such as socioeconomic status or educational attainment, which might indirectly influence political participation.

3. The study discusses theoretical or conceptual links between GI or CT programs and political participation.

The criteria were designed to capture direct and indirect relations between GI-like programs and political participation. Studies that did not meet at least one of these criteria were excluded, as well as duplicate publications and those not available in English.

Results

Study Selection and Thematic Summary

A total of 413 articles were identified from the search strategy. Duplicate and non-English were excluded, and the articles were analyzed for inclusion by examining abstracts, leaving 210 articles. Articles that seemed to fit the search criteria were reviewed in full to ensure they were appropriate for the review. Examples of articles removed include whether people will vote for a basic income program, personality traits related to political participation, charging a specific career or discipline to impact political participation and others that looked at political participation as a predictor rather than an outcome variable. The remaining 59 articles were reviewed, and the evidence of the relationship between GI-like programs on political participation and other related outcomes was synthesized. Table 1.1 shows the search process, and the remaining article counts through the process. The row values represent the number of papers remaining after each step in the inclusion/exclusion process. The final column shows the number of papers included in the literature review.

Table 1.1: Search Process and Article Count

Process Steps	Remaining Article Count
Initial search strategy	413
Remaining after removing duplicates and non-English	374
Remaining after reading the abstracts	210
Remaining after reading in full	59
Included in Lit Review	**59**

Primarily found in the first search, fifteen articles presented evidence of the relationship between GI-like programs and various aspects of political participation. All but four were in the Global South, which analyzed US, Pakistan, Finland, and Poland programs. The articles examined individual, group, state, and federal-level political engagement concepts. Ten of the articles argue to what extent, if at all, GI-like programs impact incumbent re-election.

Guaranteed Income (GI) and Cash Transfer (CT) programs have the potential to significantly influence electoral outcomes and alter the dynamics of incumbent support. Voters may attribute their increased economic stability to the policies implemented by the current government, leading to shifts in political support. For example, Brazil's Bolsa Família program has been linked to shifts in President Lula's electoral base, potentially contributing to consolidating his political support (Bohn, 2011; Zucco & Power, 2013). However, in some cases, these programs may lead to an anti-incumbent effect, as the expectation of receiving benefits drives voters to support challengers rather than incumbents (Corrêa & Cheibub, 2016). Implementing these programs may result in greater political participation among recipients as they feel more invested in the political process and the outcomes of elections.

Clientelism, or the exchange of material goods for political support, can be reinforced through GI and CT programs, with politicians using these programs to build networks of loyal supporters who rely on the benefits provided (Winters, 2010; Bohn, 2011). The electoral impact of these programs may depend on factors such as the program's size and scope, the recipients' socioeconomic conditions, and the level of political competition. The effectiveness of GI-like programs in influencing electoral outcomes may vary depending on the transparency and accountability of program implementation, as voters may perceive poorly managed programs as evidence of government incompetence or corruption. The visibility of these programs can also

influence their electoral effects, as voters who are aware of the program's benefits may be more likely to support the incumbent government. Policy feedback may occur due to GI and CT programs, as implementing these programs may lead to changes in public opinion and demands for further policy changes in areas such as education, healthcare, and social services.

The relationship between social programs and political outcomes is complex and multifaceted, with various factors shaping the electoral implications of GI and CT programs in different contexts. The long-term electoral consequences of GI and CT programs may vary, as the initial benefits of the program may diminish over time or be overshadowed by other policy issues. The electoral impact of GI and CT programs may be moderated by factors such as economic conditions, political stability, and the presence of alternative social support systems.

Successful implementation and administration of these programs may contribute to citizens' positive perceptions of government institutions. When GI and CT programs are efficiently managed and improve recipients' well-being, trust in the government may increase as citizens perceive that the government is responsive to their needs and committed to alleviating poverty (Evans et al., 2019).

However, this relationship between GI and CT programs and political trust can be context-dependent, and trust may not always increase due to these programs. For instance, in the case of anti-poverty programs in Indonesia, the relationship between program implementation and trust in government was more nuanced, with variations in trust levels depending on regional differences and the perceived quality of service delivery (Tobias, 2011). In some cases, poorly managed programs or perceived corruption in the distribution of benefits may lead to decreased trust in government institutions, as citizens may believe that the government is not acting in their best interests or is misallocating resources.

The electoral implications of increased political trust may also be closely related to the broader effects of GI and CT programs on political participation and electoral outcomes. When political trust increases, citizens may become more engaged in the political process and more likely to vote or participate in other forms of political activism. In turn, this increased political engagement may influence electoral outcomes by altering the distribution of political support and shaping the policy preferences of incumbents and challengers.

The second search identified a range of studies that provided theoretical and conceptual links between GI-like programs and political participation. Receiving a GI/CT may improve access to resources like money, education, health, and social connections. The review found that these resource-based themes increased participation in formal and traditional political activities like voting. The review also shows that oppressed groups have not been afforded the chance for social and economic mobility, causing minoritized groups, including women and people of color, to utilize alternative forms of participation less reliant on resources. Also, having poor health is associated with limited resources, like time, money, and social support. Those with poor health face social isolation and constrained self-efficacy and cognitive resources, which are barriers to political participation.

Further, the review identified that GI-like programs improve social connectedness. Following societal norms and being influenced by peers and communal groups were related to participating in political activities. Social connections come from religious, grassroots, and social change organizations through digital and local social networks and provide pathways to participation.

Cash Transfers and Politics

A study in Marica, Brazil, compared overall voter turnout and invalid vote rates in Marica before and after the RBC program was implemented. Voter turnout increased while invalid vote rates decreased in local and national elections in Marica (Araújo, 2021). The study did not test whether recipients of a basic income participate more; instead, the community participated more and submitted a higher proportion of valid votes "in the presence of a basic income." (Araújo, 2021).

One study examined the impact of PBF on the re-election of President Lula, who founded the program in 2003. The president was reelected in the subsequent 2006 election, which one author explained was unrelated to the implemented PBF program. Instead, the program's recipients were already Lula's supporters (Bohn, 2011). Although, another author argued that administering the PBF program was related to the incumbent president being reelected in 2006, as the program "shifted the electoral base" of Lula (Zucco & Power, 2013).

Developing countries benefit from innovative welfare programs, but there is little evidence that CT programs directly influence political participation. One study found that participants in the PBF program may have increased their efficacy and sense of belonging by receiving the funds (Hunter & Sugiyama, 2014). The authors argued that beyond the financial benefit of CT, the recipients had consistent contact with the government by participating in the program. However, no strong argument exists that this will necessarily translate to political participation. Literature differs on whether a sense of belonging or inclusion improves voting, especially since Brazil has compulsory voting (Hunter & Sugiyama, 2014).

Argentina implemented crisis and poverty relief programs in 2003. The programs were designed to help individuals and families in poverty. Although, the government officials administering the relief programs appeared to focus relief efforts in specific areas based on their

political makeup and how "affordable" it was to garner influence in those areas (Casas, 2020). The officials may have used the administration of poverty relief funds as a tool for political mobilization to serve their political needs rather than those in the community (Casas, 2020).

The Bono de Desarrollo Humano (BDH) in Ecuador also started in 2003, a conditional CT aimed at low-income households nationwide, serving over two million people yearly. In 2006, the eventual president Correa promised to double the transfer amount as part of his campaign. Examining these years after, one researcher found that pro-Correa areas had proportionately more transfers after taking office, and the opposite for non-pro-Correa areas (Winters, 2010). Another study of BDH found no significant impact on pro-incumbent voting based on receiving the CT, although this may differ depending on the recipient's status (Ponce & Curvale, 2020). For example, if someone newly receives the CT, they are more likely to vote for the incumbent, yet someone who ceased to receive the payment is less likely to vote for the incumbent (Ponce & Curvale, 2020).

The Honduran PRAF, a federal-level CT program from 2000 to 2005, was designed to "increase investment in human capital" for individuals in the 70 poorest municipalities in Honduras (Linos, 2013). A study of the program found no significant difference in federal-level voter support of incumbents, although incumbent mayors' re-election probability increased by nearly 40% during that period. The study suggested that supplying a CT improves some incumbent support, even if the incumbent was not responsible for the CT program. Contrary to Lehmann's study on in-kind transfers compared to cash transfers, this study suggested that CTs were more effective in increasing political support than providing public goods.

An analysis of anti-poverty programs in Indonesia studied the impacts of conditional cash transfers on political participation, support for incumbents, and other local-level political

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indicators. The conditional cash transfers were distributed directly to villages instead of individuals and were used to fund public works projects based on community input (Tobias, 2011). Implementing the program increased the support of incumbents and satisfaction levels of local government but did not increase voter turnout rates nationally or locally (Tobias, 2011). The author theorized that some satisfied constituents would decide to vote for the incumbent government while others may decide not to oppose them as they regularly may have.

Two studies of conditional CTs across Latin America found evidence that they do not improve incumbent electoral performance but may cause an "anti-incumbent effect." (Corrêa, 2015; Corrêa & Cheibub, 2016). These studies, like many others, do not focus on improving the behavior of voting or political participation. They focus on how CTs influence the popularity or performance of politicians and governments.

A study of Mexico's largest anti-poverty conditional CT program, Prospera, measured voter turnout rates relative to receipt of the program compared to financial remittances from abroad. Voting rates by municipality are negatively associated with the percent of households receiving foreign remittances (money sent from families and friends who migrated away from Mexico) (López García, 2018). Although, there was no significant difference in voting rates among municipalities when controlling for the percent of households receiving the Prospera CT (López García, 2018).

Some authors have argued that implementing cash assistance may be used for less humanitarian or empowering purposes. Ruling government officials and parties may approve a CT to garner positive support from its recipients in the election run-up. Most recently, the government of Poland approved a large cash transfer administered before its election, which may have helped the ruling party retain its power (Gromadzki et al., 2022).

Resources

Money

The prime indicator of socioeconomic status (SES) is access to money from income, wealth, or familial support. Individuals with higher levels of education tend to have higher levels of income, occupational prestige, and greater wealth--all indicators of SES (Mirowsky & Ross, 2003; Pfeffer et al., 2013). However, all population segments are not equally afforded access to money or education (Brady et al., 1995). Minoritized groups, including women and Black, Latinx, Native, and Asian folks, have faced barriers to attaining income and education throughout U.S. history (Holbrook et al., 2015; Wray-Lake et al., 2020; Kaplan, 2021). The barriers were built by decades of systemic oppression and discrimination (Brady et al., 1995; Putnam, 2000; Barnes, 2006; Wray-Lake et al., 2020). These disadvantages are connected to political participation (Schlozman et al., 1994; Brady et al., 1995; Jeong, 2012).

Having financial resources is a strong indicator of voter turnout and political participation (Barnes, 2006; Soss & Schram, 2007; Bhatti, 2017). For decades, minoritized groups have struggled to have equitable resources and accessibility to participate in politics (Wolfinger & Rosenstone, 1980; Brady et al., 1995; Barnes, 2006; Bhatti, 2017). Levels of participation vary for specific political issues, although younger, less educated, and people with low wealth and income participate less in politics overall (Holbrook et al., 2015; Barnes, 2006; Wray-Lake et al., 2020).

Many factors influence whether people can participate in politics. Many cannot participate because they lack the resources needed, while others choose not to participate for other reasons. Income and education are often considered requisite precursors to participating in politics (Brady et al., 1995; Putnam, 2000; Brady et al., 2014). Family economic status and parental education level influence political participation across generations, meaning the impact

of having resources (or not) starts before someone is born (Verba et al., 2003; Brady et al., 2014). Further, higher parental civic skills and political participation give further advantages (Brady et al., 2014).

Higher SES is associated with greater political participation, yet some studies have found higher levels of involvement from non-hegemonic groups in issue-specific politics and localized activism. Although, a vast majority of political power and influence still rests with upper-class groups (Brady et al., 1995; Sobolewska et al., 2015; Ballard et al., 2019). Minoritized populations have not had an equitable opportunity for social and economic mobility.

Education

Education is crucial for political participation because it promotes informed decision-making, civic responsibility, political awareness, and empowerment of marginalized communities (Mirowsky & Ross, 2003). Education aids in building critical thinking skills and preparing individuals to make well-informed political decisions. Education teaches people about their rights and expectations to participate in the political system. Political education empowers marginalized communities to participate. Political education comes through the education system or community groups like religious, grassroots, and social change organizations (Theocaris & van Deth, 2017).

Education provides individuals opportunities to grow and thrive, helping them achieve their full potential. More education improves job prospects, earning potential, well-being, and social mobility (Lachman & Weaver, 1998). Education can positively affect an individual's physical and mental health. It promotes healthy behaviors, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills, providing the knowledge necessary to move up the social and economic ladder (Sobolewski & Amato, 2005). Those in higher socioeconomic classes participate more fully in social, economic, and civic activities.

Political knowledge, specifically what one knows and thinks about politics, influences their willingness to participate (Brady et al., 1995; Putnam, 2000; Holbrook et al., 2015; Barnes, 2006). Political knowledge is an essential pre-condition to active forms of political involvement. It includes learning about the history and functionality of politics and understanding the current system (Holbrook et al., 2015; Park et al., 2019). Further, it is vital to know which policies are in place, which are being debated, and what activities can best influence them (Hogh & Larsen, 2016; Moeller et al., 2018; Le Roux et al., 2020).

Political education can come from formal or informal sources and can be increased with many actions to improve political participation (Reichert, 2016). From education courses to subject-specific media content, access to political knowledge expands with technology (Putnam, 2000; Conroy et al., 2012; Kofi Frimpong et al., 2020). Due mainly to the internet, knowing about candidates, proposals, and participation event information is easier to access than ever before (Moeller et al., 2018). A one-day workshop can increase political knowledge and the likelihood of voting (Hogh & Larsen, 2016). A concerted effort can teach individuals about voting and empower them. Voting is a fundamental right in representative democracies, and it is possible to have a more equitably representative government by improving political participation and knowledge (Hogh & Larsen, 2016).

Health

People with ill health, including those with psychological, physical, or intellectual disabilities, face similar participation barriers, such as discrimination and accessibility issues (Putnam, 2000; Wray-Lake et al., 2020; Brown et al., 2020). These issues impact communities of color at higher rates (Brown et al., 2020). People with poor health may have lower cognitive resources, lower self-efficacy, more unmet needs, and more limitations in time, social, emotional, and financial resources related to their health issues (Putnam, 2000; Couture & Breux,

2017; Wray-Lake et al., 2020; Brown et al., 2020). Their health needs can drain their resources, making it more difficult to procure sufficient resources. Although, those with poor health can increase their social inclusion and aid their recovery if they can politically participate (Couture & Breux, 2017; Brown et al., 2020). Making political activities more accessible may improve participation rates among these subpopulations (Barnes, 2006; Couture & Breux, 2017; Brown et al., 2020).

Social Influence, Inclusion, and Support

Social influence is a mechanism used to encourage participation in political activities (Gerber et al., 2008; Jeong, 2012; Enos et al., 2014). People are pressured by their social spheres to conform to political participation norms and expectations, such as voting or attending political events like speeches or rallies (Gerber et al., 2008; Jeong, 2012). Social spheres include community members, social group members, friends, family, or coworkers. Social influence can impact whether someone decides to engage in politics. There are numerous avenues for applying social pressure to improve political participation. Get-out-the-vote campaigns, online political interaction, publicizing one's participation, and even tagging someone in a social media post are standard methods of applying social influence in a digital space (Enos et al., 2014; Steinberg, 2015; Gerber et al., 2008; Jeong, 2012; Haenschen, 2016). While levels of social interaction in the physical world have diminished due to the ongoing COVID pandemic, there are still many avenues for social influence on political participation. Attending political events in physical spaces is an act of political participation. The event often aims to influence attendees to continue or increase their involvement.

Social influence is both latent and active. There is a common latent expectation in the US to be civically engaged, although minoritized groups have faced system discrimination detracting

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from the notion of participating (Brady et al., 1995; Putnam, 2000; Jeong, 2012). While the government is becoming more representative of historically underrepresented groups, there are centuries of problems to address (Verba et al., 2003; Holbrook et al., 2015; Michener, 2019). US voters tend to be white, well-educated, and older. Recently, using social networking sites (generally and politically) has been more prevalent among minorities, lower-income, and younger groups (Steinberg, 2015; Haenschen, 2016).

Social media offers great potential for increasing voter turnout by democratizing information. However, get-out-the-vote campaigns have increased voter turnout at disproportionately higher rates for those who already regularly participate (wealthier, more educated, older) compared to those who historically do not (less affluent, less educated, younger) (Enos et al., 2014). Even as exposure to online political media increased voting in young adults, 18- to 24-year-olds have the lowest turnout rates, especially people of color (Moeller et al., 2018).

Although continually faced with opponents attempting to stymy organizing efforts, these underrepresented groups have a rich history of community coordination (Cho et al., 2013; Brady et al., 2014). Despite barriers to participation, women and communities of color have grown levels of political participation with grassroots social influence. This social influence can come from formal civil organizations and less formal social networks, often by canvassing in person, by phone, or in digital spaces (Gerber et al., 2008; Jeong, 2012; Conroy et al., 2012; Haenschen, 2016). Social activities like attending church are essential pathways to political participation (Schlozman et al., 1994; Brady et al., 1995; Sobolewska et al., 2015).

Discussion

Summary of Results

The search found content related to GI and similar programs, including conditional and unconditional programs with targeted and universal designs. The programs may impact participation by improving self-efficacy, increasing government trust, garnering increased favor for those enacting the programs, improving health and education outcomes, and empowering economic and social growth, especially in low-income and minoritized groups. The supplemental search reinforced these themes and found other related factors, including having money and education, familial and demographic background, systemic barriers, having access to technology, and having civic skills and political knowledge.

Unsurprisingly, the factors relate to access to knowledge, resources, and social connections: all of which marginalized groups are stymied from attaining. Those groups may struggle to attain politics-specific knowledge making it challenging to understand how the political system works. Without understanding the system, feeling confident and comfortable participating can be challenging. Beyond understanding how the political system works and how to engage with it, having resources, such as money, education, and political opportunity, is necessary to participate politically (Brady et al., 1995; Putnam, 2000; Brady et al., 2014). Having resources affords the know-how and means to support political causes they are interested in (Jeong, 2012; Eskelinen & Perkiö, 2018; Allegri & Foschi, 2020).

Education's impact on political participation is twofold: it improves one's understanding of how the political system functions and is associated with increased income, giving access to specific political opportunities. Moreover, family education levels are strong indicators of subsequent generations' education level, wealth, and income (Verba et al., 2003; Brady et al.,

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2014). Those with more wealth, income, and education are less likely to face barriers to participating in politics.

Access to political activities and knowing how to influence change best is a precursor to gaining power in a government system. Further, access to resources is inextricably intertwined with political participation. If a person struggles to be involved in civic duties (such as voting) due to a lack of resources such as income, health, or knowledge, they will be unable to participate in politics effectively and consistently (Brady et al., 1995; Putnam, 2000; Holbrook et al., 2015; Brown et al., 2020). Systemic barriers to entry preclude women and minoritized communities from meaningfully engaging in the political process. Though access to resources appears to be a consistent barrier to political participation, the current body of literature lags in testing interventions, such as GI, to address these barriers to participation (Brady et al., 1995; Putnam, 2000; Brown et al., 2020).

Democracy depends on informed and engaged people. There has been a shift in how people become informed and engaged in politics in the last few decades. Expanding social networking connects like-minded people and provides information that can increase political participation. Although, there is a debate if the power of social networking sites can attenuate the long-established disadvantages of minoritized U.S. voters (Holbrook et al., 2015; Steinberg, 2015; Haenschen, 2016).

Study Implications

New methods and interventions are paramount for addressing growing economic disparities and decades-long falling political participation rates (Allegri & Foschi, 2020). Policies and programs must address many social problems burdening minoritized groups. Several entities have tested how CT programs impact voting habits and factors that may improve

political participation, like education and health. Although, few studies in the US have tested this relationship. One focused on the Eastern Band of Cherokee, in which the recipients of CTs did not have increased voting rates compared to non-recipients (Akee et al., 2018). Several entities have started to test low-barrier programs providing resources like money (i.e., guaranteed income). However, no research has been done to study the impact of receiving unrestricted cash transfers (GI) on levels of political participation in the United States.

While support has been generated, in theory, implementing and analyzing a guaranteed income intervention on political participation is novel. The potential increase in access to resources from a GI may bolster the level of political involvement by freeing up time and money for recipients to spend on participating or by way of improving their quality of life, such as using the money to increase their education or acquire assets that may help generate income (Sherraden, 1991). On the other hand, GI programs are practically never designed to fully meet a household's needs. The mainstream view has been that giving money without conditions promotes idleness and dependency, but prevailing studies have contested this view (Standing, 2011). Still, GI programs have been designed for subsistence, not vertical status movement (Banerjee et al., 2017). Further, recipients may decide to participate less when receiving a GI since they have less interest in changing the current government, presuming they are the ones that provided the money. Governments may create more policies reflecting the needs of their people.

Few studies found by the review focused on CT programs' impact on voting, and there was minimal mention of political participation beyond voting in those studies. More theorizing is happening with advanced democracies with much less active GI programs. Developing democracies have used CT programs, especially in the last 20 years. They have been popularized

as a tool to improve human development, although, depending on how the tool is used, it may shift or maintain political power (Bohn, 2011; Zucco & Power, 2013). Many of the studies focused on political support rather than improving participation rates, showing that administering CT programs can be troublesome since sometimes politicians suggest these programs to improve their chances of keeping their power rather than trying to help those most in need (Linos, 2013; Winters, 2010; Gromadzki et al., 2022). It is concerning that officials want to implement economic assistance not based on improving the overall quality of life or political involvement but on improving their chances of election (or re-election).

Strengths and Limitations

This review had several strengths. The search was extensive, using multiple search platforms that combined dozens of databases featuring thousands of peer-reviewed journals and other media. The review also utilized grey literature.

This review suffers from several limitations. The initial search of GI programs and political participation drew no results, which led to a less systematic search strategy. The search expanded to include CT programs like GI programs and garnered few relevant results. The second search was added to bolster the literature review, but it did not fill the gap in the literature analyzing GI/CT programs and political participation activities. Also, the search was limited by the author only speaking and reading English. Several articles about Brazilian cash transfer programs were exclusively published in Portuguese. Finally, this literature review does not follow an explicit reporting standard such as PRISMA or ROSES.

Conclusions

Guaranteed income and cash transfer programs have been used in the US and across the globe to address a wide array of economic and social issues. This review first analyzed the

impact of receiving a GI or CT and how it may be associated with political participation. The findings showed that GI and CT programs benefited recipients by providing unrestricted funds for necessities like food, child-care costs, and health. GI and CT programs are not typically designed to influence political participation directly. Instead, their impact on other wellness measures may indirectly influence participation. Emergent research on GI programs shows promise for increasing the amount of free time, available cash, and social support, all factors that can open opportunities for more political activity (Brady et al., 1995; West et al., 2019).

Without sufficient resources, barriers like missing work or needing childcare may negatively impact the ability to vote or be politically active (Fullerton & Borch, 2008). Financial assistance has been shown to contribute to greater wellness and improve a sense of autonomy (Heslop et al., 2018; West et al., 2019; Allegri & Foschi, 2020). It may also be a mechanism to disentangle work and income, increasing autonomy and a sense of freedom (Marinescu, 2018; Scully-Russ & Torraco, 2019; Lombardozzi, 2020). GI programs, therefore, may aid in redistributing concentrated wealth by the method of their funding (Lombardozzi, 2020; Jain Family Institute, 2021).

Guaranteed income may economically empower people and contribute to improvements in their health and wellness (Heslop et al., 2018; Jain Family Institute, 2021; West et al., 2021). Further, depending on how GI programs are funded, they may aid in redistributing concentrated wealth (West et al., 2019; Allegri & Foschi, 2020; Lombardozzi, 2020; Jain Family Institute, 2021). Receiving a GI can increase feelings of having freedom or agency (West et al., 2019; Allegri & Foschi, 2020; Palermo Kuss & Bernhard Neumärker, 2018). It may also be a mechanism to disentangle work and income (Scully-Russ & Torraco, 2019; Lombardozzi, 2020).

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With insufficient resources like education or income, engaging in the political process becomes less feasible (Brady et al., 1995; Gerber et al., 2008; Hollister et al., 2008; Jeong, 2012; Wray-Lake et al., 2020). Political participation may be improved by increasing access to resources, especially for minoritized groups (Jeong, 2012; Eskelinen & Perkiö, 2018; Wray-Lake et al., 2020). Supplying a GI gives under-resourced people access to money which may increase their ability to feel secure in the moment and plan ahead (Eskelinen & Perkiö, 2018; Allegri & Foschi, 2020).

GI programs show promise of being beneficial in an array of ways. While assets and socioeconomic status have been shown to impact political participation, more research is needed to show how and to what extent a GI would impact political participation (Sherraden, 1990; Sharratt, 2019; Allegri & Foschi, 2020). This paper reviewed the literature on resources, political participation, and guaranteed income. This review focuses on the relationship between receiving cash transfers and participating in political activities and how other factors interact with that relationship.

The significance of this review lies in its ability to inform policymakers and researchers about the potential societal consequences of guaranteed income programs beyond their primary objectives. By examining the impact of these programs on political participation, this review contributes to a more holistic understanding of the potential benefits and drawbacks of guaranteed income policies. Furthermore, the findings of this review may help policymakers anticipate potential concerns or unintended consequences related to political participation when designing and implementing guaranteed income programs.

CHAPTER II

THE DESIGN AND TESTING OF THE BRIEF POLITICAL PARTICIPATION SCALE

Abstract

A new scale was developed to measure political participation rates using a Stockton Economic Empowerment Demonstration (SEED) sample. SEED provided 131 randomly sampled individuals $500 a month for 24 months. Including control group members, 309 individuals participated in SEED's research activities, like monthly text message surveys, with varying themed questions. This paper developed and tested the reliability and validity of the Brief Political Participation Scale (BPPS). The scale was constrained to nine items that fit in a text message format as it was split into three and sent as themed questions in SEED's monthly surveys. It was developed by reviewing thousands of items from six robust, politically related surveys. The 36 items that met inclusion criteria showed seven themes emerged, which were expanded to nine items. Two-hundred sixteen SEED participants responded to at least one item, and 165 responded to all nine items. The sample included 71% women and 75% people of color, over-representing both marginalized groups. This sample was used to test the data's reliability, normality, and validity. The BPPS was tested with (BPPS9) and without (BPPS8) a question about voting. Both versions had acceptable alpha values of .829 and .855, respectively, and assumptions of normality were met for each based on skewness and kurtosis values. Exploratory factor analyses showed uni- and multi-dimensional factor structures were well-fitted for both versions, but the multi-factor structures did not group items logically. The single-factor structures' loadings were significant and above the .300 standard cutoff (Hu & Bentler, 1999). The results suggest that the BPPS with either eight or nine items is acceptable for use in the context of the SEED research project and requires more testing to confirm its validity and reliability. Since the scale is cost-effective and low-tech, it may be helpful in future research for understanding political participation activities and rates in under-resourced areas.

Introduction

Political participation is crucial to democratic societies, enabling citizens to influence government actions, policies, and social change. Political participation is essential for fostering civic engagement, accountability, and responsiveness in democratic systems. The concept of political participation encompasses a range of activities that go beyond voting in elections. These activities include but are not limited to contributing time and money to political causes, contacting public officials, attending rallies or demonstrations, assisting others in participating in politics, joining boycotts, signing petitions, and engaging in political discussions (Brady et al., 1995; Putnam, 2000; Theocharis & Deth, 2017).

Throughout history, various social groups in the United States have faced systemic barriers and disenfranchisement that have limited their ability to participate in politics. Women, Black, Hispanic, Asian, and Native American communities have long struggled for equal political rights and representation, with many only gaining legal protections for political participation during the 20th century. Despite the advancements made since then, these marginalized groups continue to face challenges in achieving equitable political representation and participation.

The impact of these historical and ongoing barriers to political participation can be seen in disparities in voting rates, representation, and political activism. In recent decades, there have been some improvements in political participation among traditionally marginalized groups, such as increased voter registration and voting rates among women and people of color. However, these gains have been uneven and often insufficient to close the gap with more privileged social groups, such as affluent white males (Pew Research Center, 2020; Roper Center, 2020).

One factor that may contribute to the persistent disparities in political participation is the concentration of power and resources among a wealthy few. This concentration can lead to a

political system that prioritizes the interests of the affluent, further disadvantaging marginalized groups through policies and practices that restrict access to the political process (Keyssar, 2000). These restrictions can include voter suppression tactics, gerrymandering, and the influence of money in politics, all of which disproportionately affect the ability of marginalized groups to participate in and influence the political system.

In light of these challenges, exploring new ways of measuring and understanding political participation is crucial to develop more inclusive and responsive political systems. A scale that captures the diverse range of political activities and experiences can provide valuable insights into the factors that drive or inhibit political participation.

Measuring Political Participation

Studies of political participation have long been grounded in psychological and sociological theory. Scholars are motivated to measure political participation to understand better and predict human behavior. Some of the first measures with questions about political participation in personality scale studies were validated seventy-five years ago (Gough et al., 1951). Some of the earliest studies of political participation looked at voting, campaigning, cooperative activities, and citizen-initiated contact (Berelson et al., 1954; Milbrath & Goel, 1965; Verba & Nie, 1972). While voting is the most common form of political participation measured and often used as the sole measure, it alone is not considered a good barometer for political participation (Talò & Mannarini, 2015).

For this study, several surveys and datasets were reviewed to determine how previously political participation was measured. The findings were used to inform the design of a Brief Political Participation Scale (BPPS) that was administered to recipients of a monthly unrestricted cash transfer program (and a control group) from the Stockton Economic Empowerment

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Demonstration (SEED). The SEED project collected extensive data throughout the project across multiple methods, including long-form web-based semi-annual surveys, monthly text message-based surveys, qualitative interviews, and with a storytelling cohort (West et al., 2019). It was determined that the political participation questions would be asked via monthly text message-based surveys. This informed the design parameters for creating the BPPS. Six major political surveys informed the content of the BPPS, as outlined next.

Roper Political and Social Trends: Participation Index

The Roper Political and Social Trends (RPST) data include 207 public opinion surveys collected from face-to-face interviews from 1973 to 1994 on social and political topics (The Roper Organization, 2022). There were ten studies per year with a few exceptions in 1973, 1991, and 1994 (two, eight, and six). The studies were conducted with a sample of American adults across 29 states, with about 2000 respondents for each observation. The observations have been extensively analyzed, with over 30,000 publications printed using the measures, most notably by Brady, Verba, and Schlozman's works (1994; 1995; 1999; 2002; 2003) and Robert Putnam's *Bowling Alone* (2000). The studies were administered quite often compared to typical studies occurring annually or at a single point in time and held relatively large cohorts of respondents (Lim & Sander, 2013).

The core question in each study, the participation index, asked about twelve types of participation with yes/no responses. Responses can be analyzed separately or counted and used to rank the level of participation between zero and twelve. The twelve types of participation include whether respondents have:

[1] written a congressperson or senator, [2]attended a political rally or speech, [3] attended a public meeting on town or school affairs, [4] held or run for political office, served as [5] an officer or [6] committee member for a local organization, [7] written a letter to the paper,

[8] signed a petition, [9] worked for a political party, [10] made a speech, [11] wrote an article for a newspaper or magazine, and [12] been a member of a group interested in better government.

The studies also ask questions about a broad range of topics related to politics. The index gives a good framework for designing SMS-based questions as they are yes/no responses. The wording is also relatively short, drawing further benefit from its design.

National Longitudinal Survey

The Bureau of Labor Statistics has administered the National Longitudinal Survey (NLS) to measure a wide range of activities related to the jobs and labor market for more than fifty years (US Department of Labor, 2022). The survey was given to six cohorts grouped by birth period. The birth periods range from 1906 to 1997. The survey includes politically related questions, including asking, on a five-point scale, about party affiliation, the strength of affiliation, the level of trust in others, and the extent to which respondents follow politics. Further, the survey asks to what extent respondents have worked or volunteered for a civic or community action group.

The survey has been extensively researched with over 10,000 citations, although only 18 articles address political participation (US Department of Labor, 2022). The major limitation of this survey is that it is not centered around political participation. The politically related questions do not focus on political activities but on interests. The questions are asked on a five-point scale, which is not conducive to being used in text-message surveying. Since the items have not been subjected to psychometric testing, there is no evidence that the questions are well-fitted for measuring political participation.

American Trends Panel

The American Trends Panel (ATP) was created in 2014 to measure political topics (Anderson et al., 2018). It collects responses via monthly self-administered online surveys, with special accommodation for those without internet access. The panel comprises over 10,000 American adults and can be considered nationally representative. The panel also conducts custom surveys with special populations such as ethnic groups (i.e., Muslim Americans) or people working in specific industries (i.e., journalists). The surveys address a wide range of politics and political behavior topics. The data have been used extensively by Pew Research and scholars over the past eight years as it is becoming a popular tool for analyzing political trends (Pew Research Center, 2022). The survey questions mimic other panels, including the RPST, although no literature on reliability or validity was found. Without psychometric data, the fit of the questions to the topic cannot be confirmed.

One report on political engagement addressed these three categories: how often one follows politics, how often one votes, and whether one engages in certain political activities (Anderson et al., 2018). The five activities were attending a political event or rally, volunteering for a political campaign, contacting an elected official, contributing money to a candidate or campaign, and attending a government or community meeting. The activities were scored on a 12-point scale weighted to favor more recent activities (within the last year or the last five years).

The panel and this report provided several popular political activities, many of which were found in the RPST. The overlap of content added support for using those activities in the questions of the PPTS. Further, this supported specifying a length of time since participating in the activities. While the questions were helpful in the design, the responses occurring on a 12-point scale appeared problematic based on character constraints inherent in text message surveying (character constraints are explored further in the Methods section).

American National Election Studies

The American National Election Studies (ANES) originated from research in 1948, with the National Science Foundation (NSF) officially founding the studies in 1977. It has become one of the most extensive politically based national surveys (DeBell et al., 2018). The ANES website lists over 7,000 publications using their data, including the two initial 1952 publications using the 1948 survey results. The extensive list includes over 1,000 public opinion and electoral behavior variables. The studies include a time series, pilots, and special studies with between 1200 and 2500 respondents. The sample was collected using complex probability sampling, oversampling minority groups, and stratified cluster sampling to improve the geographic spread of responses (DeBell et al., 2018). The studies are typically administered during most years of national elections. A biennial survey is starkly contrasted with monthly surveying in previously mentioned surveys.

The ANES survey asks about social topics like climate crises and affirmative action. The questions are asked on a Likert-type scale. One small subsection asks about political activities such as attending rallies, contributing to campaigns, working for political causes, signing petitions, and influencing others to vote. Respondents report how much they are involved in each activity or their level of interest in a cause. The survey also asks if the respondent has voted, if they are registered to vote, and for whom they voted (DeBell et al., 2018).

Citizen Participation Study

The Citizen Participation Study (CPS) focuses on voluntary and political activities and collects data on individuals' involvement in churches and organizations (Verba et al., 1990). The Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR) holds a repository of studies using and citing their data, including the CPS. The CPS has been thoroughly studied, with at least 80 scholarly articles primarily focused on its data and over 3,100 articles citing it

(ICPSR, 2022). The CPS consisted of two waves of surveying: the first wave included 20-minute telephone interviews with 15,000 respondents, and the second consisted of more extended in-person interviews with 2,517 of the initial 15,000 respondents. Activists and Black and Latino communities were targeted for the second round (Verba et al., 1990).

The survey contains voting measures in the presidential election, contacting an official, giving money to a campaign, working on a community problem with others, working on a campaign, protesting, being a board member, or being a regular meeting attendee. Some questions were asked on a 3-point Likert scale, while others were worded as yes-no responses (Verba et al., 1990). This extensive survey is not ideal for being directly transposed into a rapid-response survey, although it is a solid tool for dictating the topics used.

Cooperative Election Study

The Cooperative Election Study (CES) (formerly the Cooperative Congressional Election Study) is a survey administered during both midterm and presidential election years. The study was first collected in 2006 and has since grown into a cooperative data collection effort among at least 39 universities. The effort includes coordinating response collection for 61,000 participants (in 2020). The survey is designed to measure a wide range of politically related topics, focusing on political views and opinions. The CES includes a "common content" portion that is asked during each study and dozens of specialized topics exclusively distributed among 1,000 participant cohorts for response (2022). Each survey is given in two waves during a presidential or mid-term election year. Two-thirds of the questions are asked before that year's election, and one-third are asked proceeding it. The questions are yes or no responses and Likert-type questions with between two and seven choices. The survey also collects sociodemographic information.

The CES asked one question about political participation, asking respondents if they had participated in any of four activities "during the past year." The four activities were: [1] "attend local political meetings (such as school board or city council)," [2] "Work for a candidate or campaign," [3] "Put up a political sign (such as a lawn sign or bumper sticker)," and [4] "Donate money to a candidate, campaign, or political organization." (2022) The survey also used a service to validate if and how recipients voted (with consent). While political participation questions are a minute part of the CES, they are all found in other political participation surveys.

The CES had the fewest political participation questions of the six surveys, studies, and panels analyzed. The items are relatively concise, especially for including examples in some questions. However, based on character constraints and formatting inconsistencies from different-sized phone displays, the question was asked in a grided format, which is not transposable to SMS.

Instrument Use and Practicality

The six surveys represent some of the most robust and widely used instruments to gather politically related data. They are relatively long, taking twenty minutes to over an hour per survey or wave. They hold between dozens and thousands of response variables. The surveys benefit from being built on decades of political participation science. However, neither these studies are administered nor designed to be sent by text message. Further consideration was necessary to ensure the BPPS conformed to the constraints of being sent by text message. Text messaging overall has grown substantially and is often seen as the primary way individuals communicate, and while not present in this selection of surveys, text messaging surveying is prevalent in many fields of research.

Sit-down interviewer-administered surveys are often less convenient than text message surveys which are self-administered using a mobile device (Lugtig & Luiten, 2021). Though, respondents often use their mobile device, which they are accustomed to using, to complete short everyday tasks. There is an implicit pressure to design text and mobile surveys with brevity in mind. There is evidence of lower completion rates in mobile surveys compared to in-person surveys, in part due to how easy it is to close a browser or ignore a message on one's device compared to leaving during a survey with an interviewer (Roberts & Bakker, 2018; Lugtig & Luiten, 2021).

Text Messaging

SMS or text messaging was invented in the 1980s and used in the 1990s. They were initially used to inform cellphone users they had voicemail or for billing alerts, but by 1993, cellphones started to support user-sending of SMS messages. Texting grew in popularity; by 2007, Americans were sending more text messages than making phone calls (Kemp, 2010).

The US government has a long history of encouraging access to media and communication devices. Over the last 80 years, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has sponsored programs to expand radio, landline, and cellphone access for low-income consumers (Federal Communications Commission, 2022). Also, with time, technology has become more affordable and widespread. In 2020, 81% of people texted regularly, and 97% of Americans owned a cell phone (Pew Research Center, 2022). The affordability and ease of use have made cell phones the primary interacting device for Americans.

Text Message Surveying

Surveying has evolved by using technology to reach more people conveniently. Technology has expanded how information is collected, from phone interviews to having people

answer questions on a computer or tablet. Classic pen and paper surveying is still a method of surveying used. Surveying via text message is a natural extension of these other data collection forms. While SMS surveying is not regularly used in social science research, those using it have seen positive results (Buskirk et al., 2004; Hoe & Grunwald, 2015). It is a promising tool for the field as it is a more accessible model for reaching low-income and minority populations who use text-message services at higher rates than others (Smith, 2013). Timely and convenient surveys are vital, as one study found that about 40% of responses occur within the first day of survey release, and about 80% occur within the first week (Tyler & Olson, 2018).

Purpose of the Study

This study aimed to develop, administer, and test the brief political participation scale (BPPS): an SMS-friendly short scale on political participation. The survey was designed to adhere to the constraints of being administered by text message, specifically the 160-character limit and format constraints (i.e., unable to use grided or Likert-type responses). The six previously mentioned political participation surveys informed the instrument's content. The study tested for validity using an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and conducted reliability and normality analyses.

Methods

Design

This study aimed to develop a measure of political participation designed to be administered by text message. Participants in the SEED study (from which this study sample was drawn) were already answering four to five monthly questions by text and more than one hundred in a semi-annual long-form web-based survey. It was, therefore, decided to use a short format so as not to overburden the sample. The scale was limited to nine items. The BPPS

questions would be asked alongside the core monthly text research questions about stress and income. Questions on the BPPS also needed to be formatted in a text-message-friendly way. Text-friendly formatting included being constrained to a 160-character limit and being unable to use grided or Likert-type questions (constraints not found with web or paper-based surveying). For some cell phone providers, using more than 160 characters results in the message being sent in multiple texts or as an MMS message, which can cause issues with participants properly receiving the survey or being charged extra to receive the messages. The 160-character limit was adhered to for conciseness and to ensure the scale question messages would be sent as SMS messages. Recent research revealed that when people receive multiple messages in a row, the information is more likely to be lost or ignored, and response times slow (Sun & Lee, 2021).

Item Selection

A scoping review found many scales measuring political participation; however, there were no scales designed for text message surveying, although some items were well designed to be transposed to the format. More than two thousand items from several extensive survey studies (discussed previously in the introduction section) were reviewed to be considered for inclusion in the BPPS. Items were considered for inclusion if they met the following criteria: 1) measured political participation activities, and 2) could be phrased to fit a text-message-friendly format.

Based on the findings, it was clear that one question would be reserved to ask about voting. Of the thousands of items reviewed, 36 were retained for further analysis as they met both inclusionary criteria. While looking to cover a wide range of political activities, some overlap in these items was unavoidable. Of the 36 items, six categories or themes emerged: fourteen of the 36 items mentioned *group membership*, including looking to solve a community problem, working for a political cause, and trying to influence government. Four items mentioned *attending political meetings*, including school, town, and local affairs. Four items

mentioned *attending political rallies or speeches* (one mentions 'political meetings or rallies,'

causing a slight overlap). Five items mentioned *attending an organized protest or demonstration*.

Five items mentioned *signing a petition*. Furthermore, five items mentioned *contacting a*

government official about something important. These six categories were used to develop the

eight remaining items alongside the voting question on the BPPS. Table 2.1 displays these

themes showing how many items were chosen for each, and gives examples.

Item Wording

Stem phrases similar to '*in the past 12 months, have you*' were used for several surveys,

including the APT, CPS, and CES. That stem phrase was used at the beginning of each question

(besides the voting question) and used 32 characters per item. The questions also needed to

include the possible response options. We considered the difference between the length of a

yes/no response phrase, '1-yes 2-no' (ten characters) and two five-point Likert scale response

phrases, '1-Strongly disagree 2-Disagree 3-Neither agree nor disagree 4-Agree 5-Strongly agree'

(84 characters) and changing the middle response to 'neutral' (67 characters). When removing

the beginning phrase and response options, the characters for the remaining part of the questions

could be no more than 44 for the long five-point scale, 61 for the shortened five-point scale, and

118 for a yes/no response. Further, yes/no questions start with phrases such as 'have you' (eight

characters), while a Likert scale question may start with 'how likely were you to' (22 characters).

It was determined, therefore, that a yes or no response option best fits the character constraint

criteria for this study and allowed for the greatest number of characters to ask the question.

Table 2.1: BPPS Themes and Items

Category or Theme	# of related items	# of BPPS Questions	Examples
Group Membership	14	3	Solving community problems, working for political causes, influencing government
Attending meetings	4ʾ	1	School, town, or local affairs
Attending rallies or speeches	4ʾ	1	Political party or action group rallies or speeches
Attending organized protests or demonstrations	5	1	Protesting social occurrence or government action
Signing petitions	5	1	Online petition or paper petition to elicit government action or social change
Contacting a government official	5	1	Writing a letter, calling a congressperson
Voting	*	1	Voting in the general election

ʾOne item mentioned attending rallies or speeches and attending meetings. *All six surveys ask about voting, which was included without using this selection process.

The BPPS intended to include multiple political participation modes: in-person, online, by letter, and by phone. The questions were worded to note multiple ways of participation when applicable, but this resulted in character constraint concerns. A phrase such as 'in person, by phone, or online' is 31 characters. Although, in this case, it seemed a worthwhile use of the characters to be able to include the alternative modes of participation. The questions end with '1-no 2-yes', each displayed on separate lines after the question. Respondents were prompted to answer again if they answered anything other than 1 or 2. Respondents were habituated to responding '1' for yes and '2' for no from taking previous text-based surveys through the SEED project's research, which further reinforced the choice to use these response options.

Brief Political Participation Scale (BPPS)

The final version of the BPPS includes nine items across seven categories (voting and the six categories discussed above). Three questions were themed on group membership, one question was themed on attending meetings, one question was themed on rallies and speeches, one question was themed on protests and demonstrations, one question was themed on signing petitions, one question was themed on contacting government officials, and one was about voting in the general election. Each item begins with the stem 'in the past twelve months, have you' and ends with '1-no 2-yes'. The following is a representation of the brief political participation scale in which each question would be asked in separate text messages and waiting to send the next question until an answer has been responded.

1. In the past 12 months, have you worked with fellow citizens in-person or online to solve a problem in your community? 1-yes 2-no

2. In the past 12 months, have you attended a political meeting on local, town, or school affairs either online, by phone, or in-person? 1-yes 2-no

3. In the past 12 months, have you been an active member of a group, either online or in-person that tries to influence the public or government? 1-yes 2-no

4. In the past 12 months, have you attended a political rally or speech in-person, by phone, or online? 1-yes 2-no

5. In the past 12 months, have you worked or volunteered in-person, online, or by phone for a political cause? 1-yes 2-no

6. In the past 12 months, have you attended an organized protest either online or in-person? 1-yes 2-no

7. Did you vote in the general election this year? 1-yes 2-no

8. In the past 12 months, have you signed a paper or online petition? 1-yes 2-no

9. In the past 12 months, have you contacted a government official about an issue that is important to you either in person, by phone, by letter, or online? 1-yes 2-no

Participants

The BPPS was tested with a sample from the Stockton Economic Empowerment Demonstration (SEED), a city-led guaranteed income (GI) pilot program, with a treatment group receiving unconditional and unrestricted monthly cash transfers (and a control group). SEED was a randomized controlled trial studying the impact of a GI longitudinally across a range of measures. The participants were invited to participate in the program by mail. The mailers were sent to randomly sampled addresses within census tracts with annual median incomes at or below the city's household average, about $46,000. The US Census Bureau provides information such as demographics and income levels for census tracts (i.e., subdivisions of counties). The tracts optimally have a population size of 4,000, but it can vary from 1,200 to 8,000 (US Census Bureau, 2022).

Over 4,000 households received a SEED invitation mailer, which directed them to provide preliminary information through an online survey (West et al., 2019). Of the participants that completed the initial survey, 131 individuals were randomly selected to receive a guaranteed income in the form of a monthly unconditional cash transfer. Another 198 agreed to be in an active control group, compensated for completing surveys throughout the research project but not receiving the monthly stipend.

This psychometric study used the same 329 subjects from the SEED study as its population. Of the 329, 20 opted out of research activities, making our study sample 309 participants. The BPPS via text message to supplement the core monthly text survey. To limit the burden of adding more research questions to a sample already heavily involved in research, the BPPS was split across three months. Table 2.2 indicates the month questions were distributed and their respective response rates. Two hundred sixteen unique participants responded to at least one of the three monthly surveys, including the BPPS (69.6% response rate) and 164 responded to all nine questions (53.1%). The following response rates are in-line with typical core monthly SEED surveys, which garnered approximately 200 respondents per month.

Data Collection

Using the Qualtrics survey platform, the BPPS questions were added to three of the SEED project's text message surveys. All participants had already consented to participate in SMS-based research surveying and received SMS-based survey questions monthly for more than a year before the BPPS questions were asked. The timing of the survey administration was purposeful to allow questions during and right after the 2020 election cycle. Specifically, the question about voting was reserved for the November survey. The November survey was sent

Table 2.2: The BPPS Distribution and Response Rates

Core Text Survey Month	BPPS Items Included	Core Text Survey Response Rate
September 2020	Q1, Q2, Q3	62.5% (193/309)
October 2020	Q4, Q5, Q6	66.3% (205/309)
November 2020	Q7, Q8, Q9	64.4% (199/309)

after voting ended, making it optimal to ask whether individuals voted in the 2020 general election.

Sample Demographics

The sample of 216 included 71% women, and the median age was 45.5 years old (SD=14.9 years). Twenty-six and three-tenths of a percent were married, 16% were partnered or in a relationship, and 56.9% were single. The sample's median household size was 3.0 (SD=1.8). Fourteen and eight-tenths of a percent had less than a high school diploma, 41.42% had a high school diploma (or equivalent), 28.7% had some college, 9.7% earned a bachelor's degree, and 5.6% had education beyond a bachelor's degree. The sample's race breakdown included 51% white, 29.2% Black or African American, 1% Native American, 6.9% Asian American, 1.5% Pacific Island American, and 10.4% two or more races. Further, 36.8% of the sample identified as Hispanic or Latinx. Based on race and ethnicity responses, 75.7% of the sample identified as a person of color (i.e., not "white only"). The demographics are represented in Table 2.3.

Data Analysis

Using SPSS 27 statistical software, the three waves of data were combined into one dataset, and unrelated variables were removed. Respondents' ID numbers matched responses from the three waves. The responses of the nine items in the BPPS were re-coded with '0' as 'no' and '1' as 'yes.' Further, missing responses were coded as '-99'. After cleaning and coding the data, the scale was tested for reliability (Cronbach's alpha) and normality in the shape of the data's distribution (skewness and kurtosis).

The dataset was then used to evaluate the scale's psychometric properties. The properties were tested through factor analyses (FA) using MPlus 8.5 data software. An exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was used to explore the factor structure of the BPPS items. If the results of the

Table 2.3. Sample Demographics N=216

		Overall Sample (N=216) %/ Median (SD)
Gender	Female	71.0
Marital Status	Single	57.7
	Partnered/In a relationship	16.0
	Married	26.3
Education	Did not complete HS or equivalent	14.8
	Earned GED or HS Diploma	41.2
	Completed some college but not bachelors	28.7
	Earned bachelors	9.7
	Earned advanced degree	5.6
Race (Cat.)	White	51.5
	Black or African American	28.9
	Native Alaskan or American	1.0
	Asian American	6.9
	Pacific Islander American	1.5
	Two or more races/multiracial	10.3
Race (Bivar.)	People of Color	75.7
Ethnicity	Hispanic, Latin, or Spanish origin	36.4
Age		46 (14.9)
Median Income		1800.00 (1744.12)
Household Size	Includes adults and children	3 (1.76)

EFA indicate a multi-factor structure or issues with goodness-of-fit, performing a CFA is also recommended (Waeterloos et al., 2021).

Missing Data

Across the nine items, missingness within the sample varied between 7% and 12.5%. The Q1, Q2, and Q3 items had 11.5% missingness each. The Q4, Q5, and Q6 items had 7.0% missingness each. The Q7 item had 11.5%, Q8 had 12.1%, and Q9 had 12.5%. The pattern of missing data coincides with the three waves in which the data were collected. A weighted least square means and variance adjusted (WLSMV) approach was employed while analyzing the data in MPlus to address the missingness. WLSMV works well with sample sizes of 200 or better (Beauducel & Herzberg, 2006).

Results

Early in the process, it became clear that the question of voting (Q7) may cause issues in the model. Substantially more respondents answered yes to voting than any other activity. Because of this, an 8-item scale composite of the BPPS (here forward the BPPS8) without the voting question was tested alongside the 9-item BPPS (here forward the BPPS9).

Normality

The scale had to meet the skewness and kurtosis normality assumption to run an EFA with the data. It is recommended that a value of between -2 and +2 for skewness is appropriate, and the value of kurtosis should be between -7 and + 7 to be considered normal (Byrne & van de Vijver, 2010). The BPPS9's skewness and kurtosis values were 1.72 (S.E. = .166) and 2.49 (S.E. = .330), respectively. The BPPS8 had a skewness value of 1.85 (S.E = .166) and a kurtosis value of 2.77 (S.E. = .330). Both versions of the BPPS data meet the criteria; therefore, the assumptions for normality were met.

Reliability

Testing for reliability was done by calculating Cronbach's alpha. Acceptable alpha values are most commonly above .70 (Devellis, 2012). Too low of a value can show heterogeneity or poor inter-related fit. The BPPS9 had an alpha value of .829, and the BPPS8 had an alpha value of .855. Both indicated evidence for acceptable internal consistency among the scale items.

Validity

Construct validity, which ensures that the scale actually measures the concept it intends to, has been established by clearly defining the construct of interest and developing items that accurately reflect it (Messick, 1995). However, due to the complex nature of the measured constructs, there may still be inaccuracies or misinterpretations that limit this form of validity. Content validity, which requires the scale items to represent all possible items that could measure the construct, has been addressed through a comprehensive review of existing literature and panels run by experts (Messick, 1995). Nonetheless, some aspects of the construct may have been unintentionally omitted, introducing potential limitations.

Exploratory Factor Analysis

BPPS9

The EFA checked for between one and four-factor structures for the BPPS9, although convergence constraints caused only one and two-factor structures to be analyzed. The BPPS9's one-factor model Chi-square was $\chi^2(27) = 33.3, p = .187$, with fit indices RMSEA = .03, 90% CI (.00, .07), p-close = .775; CFI = .99, TLI = .99; SRMR = .091. These results were consistent with a well-fitting model. In the single-factor structure, all nine items loaded significantly onto one factor, at or above .300, considered the standard cutoff (Hu & Bentler, 1999). The factor loadings were (Q1) .787, (Q2) .763, (Q3) .859, (Q4) .853, (Q5) .917, (Q6) .985, (Q7) .303, (Q8)

.774, and (Q9) .839. Eight of nine items loaded above .750, not including Q7, the questions on voting.

The BPPS9's two-factor model Chi-square was $\chi^2(19) = 18.8, p = .472$, with fit indices RMSEA = .00, 90% CI (.00, .06), p-close = .894; CFI = 1.00, TLI = 1.00; SRMR = .063. These results also indicated a well-fitting model. The two-factor structure is represented in the 2.4 table.

Tables 2.5 and 2.6 show the factors with non-significant factors and those that load significantly onto more than one factor removed. The remaining structure groups Q1, Q2, Q3, and Q9 as one latent factor and Q5, Q6, and Q8 as a second latent factor. Q4 loaded onto both factors significantly, and Q7 did not load onto either factor significantly, so both were removed. While well-fitting, the groupings of the variables had no logical pattern based on the item topics. Because of this, the BPPS9 two-factor structure will not be considered further.

BPPS8

The EFA checked for between one and four-factor structures for the BPPS8. The EFA was run with eight items, not including Q7. The single-factor BPPS8 model Chi-square was $\chi^2(20) = 26.9, p = .138$, with fit indices RMSEA = .04, 90% CI (.00, .08), p-close = .637; CFI = .99, TLI = .99; SRMR = .083. The results indicated a well-fitted model, slightly more so than the BPPS9 single-factor model. All eight items loaded significantly onto one factor above .750 in the single-factor structure, much higher than the .300 cutoff. The factor loadings were (Q1) .788, (Q2) .767, (Q3) .855, (Q4) .852, (Q5) .915, (Q6) .987, (Q8) .767, and (Q9) .844. They are represented below in table 2.7.

Table 2.4. One Factor EFA Structure for BPPS9

Question Number	Factor 1
Q1	.787[*]
Q2	.763[*]
Q3	.859[*]
Q4	.853[*]
Q5	.917[*]
Q6	.985[*]
Q7	.303[*]
Q8	.774[*]
Q9	.839[*]

[*]Denotes significant factor loadings (p<.05).

Table 2.5. Two-Factor EFA Structure for BPPS9

Question Number	Factor 1	Factor 2
Q1	.890[*]	-.068
Q2	.796[*]	.003
Q3	.578[*]	.342
Q4	.467[*]	.450[*]
Q5	.018	.906[*]
Q6	-.004	1.024[*]
Q7	-.255	.596
Q8	.241	.589[*]
Q9	.860[*]	.034

[*]Denotes significant factor loadings (p<.05).

Table 2.6. Two-Factor EFA Structure for BPPS9

Question Number	Factor 1	Factor 2
Q1	.890*	
Q2	.796*	
Q3	.578*	
Q4		
Q5		.906*
Q6		1.024*
Q7		
Q8		.589*
Q9	.860*	

*Denotes significant factor loadings (p<.05).

The BPPS8's two- and three-factor models were also well-fit, but none of the factors made substantive sense based on the item content. The two-factor model included Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4, Q8, and Q9 on one factor and Q5 and Q6 on a second. The three-factor model included Q1, Q3, and Q9 on one factor, Q4, Q5, Q6, and Q8 on a second factor, and Q2 solely on a third factor. Neither version was obtained for further analysis.

The results of the EFA indicated that a single-factor structure was well-fitting for the BPPS8 and BPPS9 and the best-fitting factor structure for both. A confirmatory factor analysis was used to check both scales for relationships between items using modification indices that may improve the model. Although, since the models were already well-fit, no modification indices were shown for either scale model.

Discussion

This study was designed to develop an instrument to capture political participation rates by text message surveying. The scale asked about multiple forms of participation activities by drawing from a large body of literature. The questions asked respondents whether they voted, were part of a politically motivated group, attended politically related events, and participated in protests or petitions. A scale has yet to be designed to study political participation by text message. This study described a new instrument's development and psychometric properties, the Brief Political Participation Scale. The BPPS is a unidimensional measure of participating in political activities designed to be administered by text message. The scale was created to be a brief, text-message-friendly survey on political participation.

Table 2.7. One Factor EFA Structure for BPPS8

Question Number	Factor 1
Q1	.788*
Q2	.767*
Q3	.855*
Q4	.852*
Q5	.915*
Q6	.987*
Q8	.767*
Q9	.844*

*Denotes significant factor loadings (p<.05).

The scale was essential to test the impact of having extra resources, in this case, a monthly unrestricted, unconditional cash transfer, on political participation. It was the first of its kind designed with these parameters.

Strengths and Limitations

Sample Characteristics

The sample of Stocktonian adults over-represented women (71%) and people of color (75%). The sample is advantageous in analyzing the experiences of two groups underrepresented in research and traditionally economically and politically discriminated against (Schlozman et al., 1994; Chawla et al., 2017). The sample was from the SEED research project, a randomized controlled trial that is often considered the optimal way to organize a research trial (Morgado et al., 2017). The sample size was also acceptable, exceeding the 10 participants for each scale item, rule of thumb (Boateng et al., 2018), with 216 participants and nine items.

Methodology

The survey was purposely distributed in the lead-up to (and two weeks after) the general election. Participants could self-report their participation and voting habits during the busiest part of the election cycle (Pew Research Center, 2022). The survey timing was optimal for self-reporting of voting habits since delays in self-reporting may hinder the information's accuracy (Wolfinger & Rosenstone, 1980). Conversely, the timing raises caution that participation rates may be overinflated compared to asking at other times in the election cycle. The data were collected in chunks at three different times, so participants had to complete three mini-surveys three times across three months to fully respond to the BPPS questions. This requirement may have led to incomplete and inconsistent responses. Even though the data were collected thrice, since the questions differed each time, it was still considered cross-sectional, limiting the study's ability to test for a causal relationship.

While most people text message, not all do, and not all prefer to interact by text message. Participants without access to text or who did not want to take the surveys by text message were offered to take an identical web-based survey. An alternative way to complete the survey offers a universal approach to response collection, which is especially important when working with vulnerable and disadvantaged populations.

The initial number of items analyzed to be a part of the scale exceeded thirty, although, since the scale was an add-on to the core SEED monthly surveys, the number of questions the scale could include was limited. If the scale had been administered as a stand-alone survey, asking more questions would have helped create a well-fitting scale model.

Reliability and Validity

A consequence of running the factor analyses with the same sample was the increase in expectation of a well-fitting model, which the scales had (Marsh et al., 2014). Further, the study limited the survey length to nine items. Optimally, the scale could have included the 36 items taken from the initial six surveys, and asked more questions to allow the scale to measure more than one dimension or factor. More questions would allow the scale to improve its fit with more opportunities to remove items and utilize modification indices. By having more items, a model with more factors could better express scale content themes.

While the study shows evidence of construct and content validity, it falls short of providing evidence for criterion validity. The BPPS was not correlated to other measures of political participation, which would have strengthened the evidence for its validity. Giving the BPPS to a new group in future studies would allow the scale's construct and content validity to be reinforced and its criterion validity tested. There would also be an opportunity to test the BPPS' test-retest reliability by giving it to a different cohort.

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Missing data

One hundred sixty-five of the 216 participants (who answered at least one question) answered all items in the BPPS. In other words, 23.6% of the sample returned incomplete responses to the BPPS. Individual items ranged from 6.9% to 12.5% missing responses. The completion rate of the BPPS likely would have been higher if all items were asked at one time rather than split across three times.

Study Implications

Practice Implications

The BPPS scale is brief, cost-effective, and has paperless, low-tech administration. These elements are beneficial for researchers and potential respondents. Participants may be more apt to take a survey like the BPPS compared to a sit-down interviewer-administered survey like the six described earlier. Time is a commodity that is less afforded to lower-income communities; the BPPS may be beneficial in engaging those communities without time-burdening them.

Administering the BPPS in a community can help show the types of activities members engage in most. It can also show how active the group is across various activities. This information can be used to plan events to improve participation rates for the activities done least often. The activities that lack engagement could be bolstered with actions like setting up petition signing spots in communities, for example. Knowing the types of activities that are done most often can give a means for engaging a community in those activities. Community-oriented entities like social workers or community action organizations would most likely use this.

Community education programs on engaging in politics have previously improved participation rates (Persson, 2015). This tool may be useful for organizations like political interest groups. Specifically, a social work-based political interest group could use the BPPS to target certain people or neighborhoods within communities to gauge how politically active they

are. They may compare the average BPPS scores among neighborhoods. Then, they may engage with lower-participation neighborhoods in efforts to improve participation.

Social workers are tasked with engaging in social justice advocacy, one of which is through educational content. This includes academic curricula and community-level educational interventions, such as the University of Connecticut's Humphries Institute, which offers educational voter engagement training to students, communities, and professionals (Lane, 2011; The Humphrey's Institute, n.d.). Further, the knowledge from the BPPS could help inform which kind of opportunities neighbors are inclined to participate in. Political interest groups may engage with higher-participation neighborhoods to find more individuals and groups primed to engage. Also, if the community consents to providing contact information, people likely to participate in certain types of activities can be directly targeted to engage in related upcoming activities.

Research Implications

Future studies could test the validity and reliability of the BPPS with a larger sample. This study met acceptable sample size benchmarks to provide evidence of the validity and reliability of the BPPS. However, testing it with larger samples could provide more evidence and address the previously mentioned construct, content, and criterion validity limitations. The scale should also be tested with different groups as it may give a brief view of the participation habits of minoritized groups like immigrants or the LGBT community. The BPPS may help compare different samples, such as political participation rates by age or generation.

Another way to improve the scale in future research may be by redeveloping the items on the scale. The scale could be shortened by maximizing the limits of character constraints and combining questions. Conversely, the scale is primed to be more extensive by asking questions

about other related political topics, habits, or preferences. Future studies may find the format of the BPPS useful in designing SMS scales.

As mentioned previously, text message surveying is a natural extension of other modalities of surveying. It most closely aligns with web-based or digital surveys as they collect the survey in an automated fashion and store the survey results automatically. Since the burden of a survey impacts whether and how accurately someone responds to it, convenience and ease have become increasingly valued in data collection (Hoe & Grunwald, 2015). Future research may be needed to understand how much text message surveying is beneficial or limiting for both participants and researchers. Text surveying may be limiting if, for example, asking how much time or money participants spent doing different political activities. Conversely, the BPPS could be supplemented to measure what extent people participate in the activities, not just how many different types.

Conclusions

These limitations notwithstanding, the results of this study provided evidence of the Brief Political Participation Scale being a valid and reliable instrument that allows concise capturing of how many different political activities one participates in. This study is the first to report on an instrument developed to measure political participation via SMS surveying. The BPPS adds value to the field by providing a survey designed to be sent in a cost-effective, low-tech manner by text message. This convenience allows for direct engagement with a wide range of individuals. It can easily be formatted for a computer, pen-and-paper, or oral interview. Nine yes/no response items allow the survey to be completed in less than five minutes. Participants responded by texting a single digit (1 or 2) for each response, making the process simple. This

instrument allows future research to study political participation in various contexts with

minimal expense and effort.

CHAPTER III

THE IMPACT OF RECEIVING A GUARANTEED INCOME ON POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

Abstract

The Stockton Economic Empowerment Demonstration (SEED) is a modestly sized randomized controlled trial to test the effects of receiving unconditional cash on financial, health, and wellbeing outcomes. SEED provided 131 randomly sampled individuals $500 monthly for 24 months. Including control group members, 309 individuals participated in SEED's research activities, like monthly text message surveys, with varying themed questions. This study used the Brief Political Participation Scale (BPPS), a newly developed scale, to analyze the political participation rates of a sample of 215 SEED participants. Participants were asked whether they participated in nine political activities in the past 12 months, including voting, signing a petition, and attending political rallies. The study's analysis tested for differences in BPPS scores between the treatment and control groups while controlling for demographic characteristics. The findings indicate that the group receiving the GI and the control group did not have significantly differing BPPS scores. A significant variance in BPPS scores was found when the demographic variables were added to the model ($R^2 = .095$ [.057 adjusted], $F(8, 193) = 2.52$, p = .012). However, the education variable was the only variable associated with a statistically significant change in BPPS scores ($\beta = .298$, $t(193) = 4.30$, $p < .001$). Another analysis of education alone on BPPS scores showed that education accounted for more adjusted variance compared to the full model ($R^2 = .084$ [.080 adjusted], $F(1, 213) = 19.574$, p < .001). Further exploration showed that the most educated people participated in nearly twice as many political activities as the least educated. The GI was not impactful enough to show a difference in BPPS scores between the groups.

Introduction

Political Participation

Political participation is a cornerstone of democracy, allowing citizens to voice their opinions, influence policy decisions, and hold elected officials accountable. It encompasses a variety of activities, including voting, volunteering for political campaigns, attending rallies or demonstrations, signing petitions, and engaging in political discussions. Active political engagement is vital for a functioning democracy, as it enables the government to understand better and address the needs and concerns of its citizens.

However, political participation rates tend to vary across different segments of the population. Marginalized groups, such as women, racial and ethnic minorities, and individuals with lower socioeconomic status, often face barriers to political engagement (Brady et al., 1995). These barriers may include legal restrictions, social exclusion, or lack of access to resources and information. As a result, these groups are often underrepresented in the political process, which can lead to policies that do not adequately address their needs and perpetuate inequality (Verba et al., 1995).

In order to foster more equitable political participation, it is essential to understand the factors that influence engagement and identify potential interventions that can help break down barriers. By better understanding the drivers of political participation and the obstacles marginalized groups face, policymakers can develop targeted strategies to promote a more inclusive democracy. Researchers have explored a variety of approaches, from improving civic education and increasing access to information to reducing the influence of money in politics and promoting more inclusive representation in government.

Income's Influence on Political Participation

The study of political participation also includes examining the impact of various policies and programs on civic engagement. One such area of interest is the influence of income on participation and the potential influence of guaranteed income programs on such. Theory suggests that income changes influence political participation, especially for low-income individuals, and less so the more someone's income is (Wolfinger & Rosenstone, 1980; Brady et al., 1995). One study suggests a positive correlation between income and voter turnout but with diminishing effects with higher income (Schafer et al., 2022). Economic hardships such as adverse income shocks impact low-earner participation and decrease social ties and institutional trust, which could indirectly affect participation (Akee et al., 2018; Schafer et al., 2022). A comparative study of panel data found no significant differences in participation for young and low-income earners when experiencing a change in income. At the same time, the authors suggested that involvement was influenced more by parental economic status and political involvement than short-term income fluctuations (Jungkunz & Marx, 2021).

Another study evaluated whether a rise in the minimum wage motivates low-income individuals to vote. Using panel data, researchers found that recent minimum wage hikes significantly boosted voting among full-time low-wage workers. Specifically, an eight percent increase in the minimum wage, approximately $130 to $170 more monthly, resulted in a one-third percent increase in voter turnout (Markovich & White, 2019). While one-third percent is minute, the presidential election in Michigan in 2016 was decided by one-third percent or about 13,000 votes state-wide. These findings suggest that economic policies like minimum wage increases can enhance political participation among low-income workers, thus making the electorate more diverse and representative.

Guaranteed Income

Recently there has been growing interest in understanding if and how a guaranteed income may influence participation. Past research typically includes the interaction of income with factors like education, race, neighborhood affluence, and employment status for significantly influencing political participation (Wolfinger & Rosenstone, 1980; Akee et al., 2018; Loeffler, 2022). A recent analysis of the Alaska Permanent Fund Dividend on general election voting showed an overall increase in voter turnout in Alaska following the fund's implementation (Loeffler, 2022). However, another study of a GI's impact on voting propensity found different effects based on socio-economic background, with children who grew up in initially poorer households having increased voting propensity in adulthood (Akee et al., 2018). Since GI and similar programs vary widely in conditionality and amount and frequency of support, there is not current accepted level of income needed to elicit an effect on political participation (Akee et al., 2018; Loeffler, 2022).

Guaranteed income (GI) programs have emerged as a potential solution to the pressing issues of poverty, economic inequality, and social exclusion. These programs typically provide regular, unconditional cash transfers to beneficiaries to ensure basic financial security (Marinescu, 2018). The premise behind GI programs is that by offering individuals a stable source of income, they can invest in their well-being, pursue education or employment opportunities, and ultimately become more active and engaged members of society (Widerquist, 2005).

Various models of GI programs range from universal basic income, which provides cash transfers to all citizens regardless of income or employment status, to targeted programs focusing on specific vulnerable populations (Marinescu, 2018). These programs have been implemented in different countries and regions with varying degrees of success.

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A growing body of research has explored the economic and social impacts of GI (and GI-like) programs, demonstrating positive outcomes in terms of poverty reduction, increased educational attainment, and improved health and well-being (Barrientos, 2013; Araújo, 2021; West & Castro, 2023). However, less attention has been given to the potential effects of GI programs on political participation (Hirvonen et al., 2022).

As political engagement is closely linked to individuals' sense of agency, empowerment, and access to resources, it is plausible that GI programs could positively influence civic involvement (Linos, 2013). By addressing some of the underlying economic and social challenges marginalized populations face, GI programs may help to level the playing field and empower individuals to become more active and engaged citizens (Ponce & Curvale, 2020). This area of inquiry holds significant potential for understanding the broader societal impacts of GI programs and their role in promoting a more inclusive democracy.

GI programs represent a promising policy tool for addressing poverty and inequality, with potential implications for political participation (Evans et al., 2019). By examining the effects of these programs on civic engagement, researchers can contribute valuable insights into the broader impacts of GI programs on society and inform future policy decisions.

Purpose and Objectives of the Study

This paper aimed to test the impact of guaranteed income on political participation. The specific objectives of the study were:

1. Test whether political participation was significantly different based on receiving monthly guaranteed income.

2. Test whether demographic factors, including race, gender, education, and income, were associated with differences in political participation.

3. Explore the relationship between individual demographic factors and political participation for the whole sample.

Methods

Study Recruitment

This study used a sample from the Stockton Economic Empowerment Demonstration (SEED). SEED was a city-led guaranteed income (GI) pilot program that provided $500 of unrestricted and unconditional cash to 131 participants monthly from February 2019 to February 2021. SEED recruited participants from specific areas within Stockton, California. Some participants received guaranteed income (GI) or consistent cash transfers, while others participated in research without getting the transfers. This randomized controlled trial used random sampling to invite folks in neighborhoods where the annual median incomes were at or below $46,033, the city's median annual income.

Over 4,000 invitations to participate were mailed to those in qualifying areas, which asked them to complete initial research questions (West et al., 2019). Participants were randomly selected and assigned to the group receiving the GI, monthly cash transfer (here on the 'treatment group'), and a control group. SEED provided $500 monthly cash transfers to 131 participants, while 198 individuals comprised the control group. All 329 participants were invited to participate in research activities, although 20 participants opted out of research activities before data collection started (N=309).

Design

SEED research activities included individual interviews, community-based participatory research-like meetings, storytelling opportunities, monthly text-message-based short surveys, and semi-annual long-form surveys. Data were on various subjects, including health and finance-

related outcomes. The researchers utilized repeated measures and changed survey and interview content based on historical events, including the general election and the onset of the COVID pandemic (West & Castro, 2023).

This study was designed to analyze political participation with the SEED research cohort. SEED participants were sent the Brief Political Participation Scale (BPPS). Since the participants already had a relatively high research burden, the BPPS was parsed into three parts and sent to the participants with three of the core monthly text message surveys. All participants had already consented to participate in SMS-based research surveying and received a monthly core survey each month for eighteen months before the BPPS questions were asked. All surveys used to collect the data were created and administered using Qualtrics. Using the Qualtrics survey builder, three different BPPS questions were added to three core monthly surveys sent in September, October, and November 2020. The BPPS questions supplemented the core monthly text questions about stress and income. The participants responded to the BPPS questions like yes/no questions had been answered within these surveys previously.

Each survey launched on the third Sunday of the month at 6 PM local time, in typical fashion with the core monthly surveys. The pre-existing participant contact list was used to administer the survey. One week before the launch, the contact information was updated as needed, and survey distributions were set up in the Qualtrics system. Each survey launch was accompanied by a reminder message 48 hours later. The SEED research fellow followed up with unfinished respondents each month to increase response rates. They followed up individually by phone, text, and email for about ten days after each survey launch.

Instruments and Measures

Political Participation

        The BPPS is a 9-item scale that asks whether respondents have participated in 9 political

activities recently. The BPPS was developed by conducting an extensive literature review on

political activities from related scales. The review disseminated thousands of politically related

variables from six robust and popular surveys and panels. One question was allocated to ask

whether the respondent had voted, as voting is mentioned in practically all political participation

research. For this study, political participation was operationalized using the composite score

from the nine items on the BPPS.

        The review collected 36 items about political activities, which were then grouped into six

categories or themes. The six categories include group membership (Q1, Q3, & Q5), attending

political meetings (Q2), attending rallies or speeches (Q4), attending an organized protest or

demonstration(Q6), voting (Q7), signing a petition (Q8), and contacting a government official

(Q9). The latter five categories aligned to about five items each, while group membership

aligned with fourteen of the 36 items. There was some overlap across categories, which was

unavoidable. Regardless, group membership was the most prominent political activity category

from the literature review. Therefore, the BPPS included one question for each of the latter five

categories and three questions for group membership. The BPPS was constructed with nine items

describing participating in political activities and is displayed in table 3.1.

Table 3.1 Brief Political Participation Scale Questions

Question Number	BPPS Items
Q1	In the past 12 months, have you worked with fellow citizens in-person or online to solve a problem in your community?
Q2	In the past 12 months, have you attended a political meeting on local, town, or school affairs either online, by phone, or in-person?
Q3	In the past 12 months, have you been an active member of a group either online or in-person that tries to influence the public or government?
Q4	In the past 12 months, have you attended a political rally or speech in-person, by phone, or online?
Q5	In the past 12 months, have you worked or volunteered in-person, online, or by phone for a political cause?
Q6	In the past 12 months, have you attended an organized protest either online or in-person?
Q7	Did you vote in the general election this year?
Q8	In the past 12 months, have you signed a paper or online petition?
Q9	In the past 12 months, have you contacted a government official about an issue that is important to you either in person, by phone, by letter or online?

Then contextual constraints to its administration were considered. Since the scale was being sent by text message, the questions and responses were written with less than 160 characters, the standard limit for SMS messages. Exceeding the character limit may cause the questions to be split into two texts or for the message to be sent as an MMS, both which may compromise the functionality and simplicity of the scale's design. Further, the scale was designed as a short form, with only nine questions. The formatting of the scale mimicked the format of previous text-message questions that were previously sent to SEED participants (the subjects of this study), which they were accustomed to receiving and responding to.

Demographics

Demographic variables were extracted from semi-annual long-form surveys given to this sample through the SEED study. The demographic variables included income, education, race, ethnicity, gender, age, household size, and marital status.

Income. Monthly income data were collected throughout the SEED study. SEED's core monthly text message surveys asked participants to report their income for the previous month. This study used twelve months of self-reported income data to calculate the median income for participants. When treatment group members reported $0 monthly income, the responses were imputed at $500 to reflect the receipt of the GI. Z-scores of median income were used to remove participants above or below three standard deviations away from the average median income value (resulting in one member of the control groups being removed). This study subsequently calculated the mean, standard deviation, median, and range of the calculated median income values for the overall sample and the treatment and control groups.

Education. The five-category education level variable was transposed from the long-form survey's education level question, which had eleven response options. The first four responses ranged from 'no formal education' to 'completed some but not all of high school'.

These were grouped as 'less than high school or GED.' Two responses included completing a GED or high school diploma. The two were grouped as 'Earned high school diploma or GED.' Two other responses included completing some college but not earning a bachelor's and were categorized together as 'some college without earning bachelor's.' The final two categories were directly transposed from the long-form survey; one for 'completed bachelor's and one for 'completed graduate degree.' A write-in option was also interpreted and re-categorized into the five options.

Race and Ethnicity. The long-form survey's race variable included 15 options. The options included white, Black or African American, American or Alaskan Native, seven Asian choices, four Pacific Islander choices, and an "other" choice where participants could write in their race or ethnicity. The respondent could mark as many as applicable. The 14 options and write-in responses were transposed into six categories, including white, Black or African American, Native Alaskan or American Indian, Asian American, Native Pacific Islander, and multiracial. Respondents were considered multiracial if they answered in two or more categories. The ethnicity variable was from a yes/no question asking whether the person was of Hispanic, Latin, or Spanish origin. Because of the small sample sizes of native, Asian, and Pacific Islander groups, participants' race was also differentiated as white people or people of color. Participants were considered people of color if they answered any race other than white (as defined by the Census). Those who responded positively to being Hispanic, Latin, or Spanish in origin were also categorized as people of color.

Gender. The long-form survey's gender question had four responses: male, female, non-binary/non-confirming, and transgender. Due to a lack of responses in two categories, the gender variable was binary, with only male and female responses.

Age. The age variable was calculated using the participants' dates of birth. Their whole-number age was used based on their age as of November 15th, 2020, the launch date of the last of the three survey waves.

Household Size. The household size variable was calculated from long-form questions asking how many adults and children lived there. The variable was created by adding one (representing the respondent) to the sum of the two responses to the two questions.

Marital Status. The marital status question in the long-form survey was retained in full. The variable included three response options from the survey: single, partnered/in a relationship, or married.

Study Participants

The sample for this study included 215 participants of the 309 participants in SEED who responded to at least one of the BPPS questions (69.6% response rate). Of the 215 who answered at least one question, 164 responded to all nine BPPS questions (76.2% of the study sample). The sample's demographics are shown in Table 3.2. The table shows the overall sample demographics and the treatment and control groups.

One hundred ten people received the GI in the experimental group, and 105 were in the control group. The experimental group included 69.4% women, and the mean age was 46.1 (SD=14.9 years). Fifty-eight- and one-half percent were single, 27.4% were married, and 14.2% were partnered or in a relationship. The median household size was 3.0 (Mean=3.2, SD=1.7). Fourteen and one-half percent had less than a high school diploma, 43.6% had a high school diploma (or equivalent), 25.5% completed some college but not a bachelor's degree, 8.2% earned a bachelor's degree, and 8.2% earned an advanced degree.

Table 3.2: Sample and Group Demographics

		Overall Sample N=215	Treatment Group n=110	Control Group n=105
		%/ Median (SD)	%/ Median (SD)	%/ Median (SD)
Gender	Female	71.4	69.4	73.3
Marital Status	Single	58.0	58.9	57.1
	Partnered/In a relationship	16.0	14.0	18.1
	Married	25.9	27.1	24.8
Education	Did not complete high school or GED	14.9	14.5	15.2
	Earned GED or High School Diploma	41.4	43.6	39.0
	Completed some college but not Bachelor's	28.8	25.5	32.4
	Earned Bachelor's	9.8	8.2	11.4
	Earned advanced degree	5.1	8.2	1.9
Race (cat.)	White	51.2	45.2	57.6
	Black or African American	29.1	27.9	30.3
	Native American	1.0	1.0	1.0
	Asian American	6.9	9.6	4.0
	Pacific Islander	1.5	1.9	1.0
	Multiracial	10.3	14.4	6.1
Race (Bivar.)	Percent people of color	76.1	79.6	72.4
Ethnicity	Hispanic, Latin, or Spanish origin	36.6	38.0	35.2
Age		45 (14.8)	45 (14.9)	47 (14.7)
Median Income		1790 (1508.40)	1900 (1632.77)	1500 (1343.78)
Household Size		3 (1.76)	3 (1.69)	3 (1.84)

The experimental group's race breakdown included 45.2% white, 27.9% Black or African American, 1.0% Native Alaskan or American, 9.6% Asian American, 1.9% Pacific Islander American, and 14.4% noted two or more races—further, 38.0% of the sample identified as Hispanic or Latinx and 79.6% were people of color.

The control group was 73.3% women, and the median age was 47 (SD=14.9). Fifty-seven and one-tenth of a percent were single, 24.8% were married, and 18.1% were partnered or in a relationship. The median household size was 3.0 (Mean=3.1, SD=1.8). Fifteen and two-tenths of a percent had less than a high school diploma, 39.0% had a high school diploma (or equivalent), 32.4% completed some college but not a bachelor's degree, 11.4% earned a bachelor's degree, and 1.9% earned an advanced degree. The control group's race breakdown included 57.6% white, 30.3% black, 1.0% Native, 4.0% Asian, 1.0% pacific islander, and 6.1% multiracial. Further, 35.2% of the group identified as Hispanic or Latinx, and 72.4% were people of color.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using the statistical software SPSS. The data were treated using case-wise deletion during analyses. Missing responses for individual items of the BPPS varied between 7% and 12.5%, and 23.6% of the sample did not complete all questions.

First, Pearson's chi-square tests and t-tests were used to test the balance of the treatment and control groups based on demographics, including gender, age, education, median income, household size, marital status, and race. Second, a linear regression was used to test the difference between the treatment and control groups (independent variable) and political participation (dependent variable). Then, the same regression was run but controlled for the demographics mentioned above. Finally, exploratory analyses investigate differences in BPPS scores between demographic groups.

Using SPSS data software, the three waves of data (corresponding to the three months data was collected) were combined into one dataset; and unrelated variables were removed. Respondents' ID numbers matched responses from the three waves. The responses of the nine items in the BPPS were re-coded with '0' as 'no' and '1' as 'yes.' Further, missing responses were coded as '-99'.

GPower software was used to analyze the statistical power of the data. The a priori analysis for a linear regression analysis included αAlpha set to .05, power set at .95, eight predictor variables included, and a medium effect size of F^2 at .15. With these parameters, a total sample of 160 was required. The a priori analysis for t-tests of groups' mean differences included the same Alpha and power values and a medium effect size of d at .5. The allocation ratio to groups was set at .96, and the ratio of the samples of treatment and control members for this study. With these parameters, the group sample sizes required are 90 and 86, 176 in total. The data are well-powered to test medium effect sizes in regression and group difference analyses.

Results

Descriptive
Group Demographics

A series of chi-square tests and t-tests were performed to test the balance of the treatment and control groups by the demographic variables. Equal variances were assumed for all tests between the groups. The chi-square test results indicated no significant difference between groups based on marital status, education level, gender, race, or ethnicity. There was also no significant difference in the number of people of color between groups. The t-test results also indicated no significant difference between groups based on median income, age, or household size. The p-values ranged from p = .178 to p = .957, shown in tables 3.3 through 3.9.

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Table 3.3: Chi-Square Tests of Marital Status by Group

		Marital status			
		Single	Partnered, not married	Married	Total
Treatment or Control Group?	Control	60	19	26	105
	Treatment	63	15	29	107
Total		123	34	56	212

$\chi^2 (2) = .689$, p = .709

Table 3.4: Chi-Square Test of Education by Group

		Education Level					
		< HS diploma	HS diploma/ GED	Some college, no degree	Bachelors degree	Graduate degree	Total
Treatment or Control Group?	Control	16	41	34	12	2	105
	Treatment	16	48	28	9	9	110
Total		32	89	62	21	12	215

$\chi^2 (4) = 5.901$, p = .207

Table 3.5: Chi-Square Test of Gender by Group

		Gender		
		Female	Male	Total
Treatment or Control Group?	Control	77	28	105
	Treatment	75	33	108
Total		152	62	213

$\chi^2 (1) = .394$, p = .530

Table 3.6: Chi-Square Test of Race (categorical) by Group

		Race (Categorical)						
		white	Black	Native	Asian	Pacific Islander	Multiracial	Total
Treatment or Control Group?	Control	57	30	1	4	1	6	99
	Treatment	47	29	1	10	2	15	104
Total		105	59	2	14	3	21	203

$\chi^2 (5) = 7.622$, p = .178

Table 3.7: Chi Square Test of Race (Bivariate) by Group

		Race (Bivariate)		
		white	nonwhite	Total
Treatment or Control Group?	Control	29	76	105
	Treatment	22	86	108
Total		52	162	213

χ^2 (1) = 1.536, p = .215

Table 3.8: Chi Square Test of Ethnicity by Group

		Ethnicity		
		Not Hispanic/Latin/ Spanish	Yes, Hispanic/Latin/ Spanish	Total
Treatment or Control Group?	Control	68	37	105
	Treatment	67	41	108
Total		136	78	213

χ^2 (1) = .170, p = .680

Table 3.9 t-test and Group Statistics

	Treatment or Control Group?	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Median Monthly Income	Treatment	110	2274.07	1632.77	155.68
	Control	105	1875.72	1343.78	131.14
Age of Nov 2019	Treatment	108	45.06	14.86	1.43
	Control	105	46.73	14.69	1.43
Household Size	Treatment	108	3.19	1.69	.16
	Control	105	3.07	1.84	.18

Median Income: $t(214) = 1.169$, p = .244. *Age:* $t(212) = .957$, p = .340.
Household Size: $t(212) = -.572$, p = .568.

Median Monthly Income

In our sample, one participant in the control group had a median income of $14,500. This amount was 7.1 standard deviations above the mean (Z = 7.1), indicating that this participant's income was well beyond the rest's. This participant was removed from the sample. The median monthly income values for the total sample ranged from $0 to $7,161. The average collective median income value was $2,079 (SD = $1,508), and the collective median monthly income value was $1,790. For the treatment group, the range of median monthly incomes was $500 to $7,161. The average collective median monthly income was $2274 (SD = $1,633), and the collective median income value was $1,900. For the control group, the range of median monthly income was $0 to $6,505. The average collective median monthly income value was $1,876 (SD=$1,344), and the collective median monthly income was $1,500. Table 3.10 displays this data on median monthly income.

BPPS Scores

Table 3.11 contains the percentage of positive responses for the overall sample and treatment and control groups for each item on the BPPS. The mean, standard deviation, median, and mode scores are also provided, as well as the percent of the group that had the mode scores. The range of possible scores for the BPPS is 0 to 9, with 0 indicating the respondent participated in none of the mentioned political activities and values one to nine indicating how many of the nine activities they participated in.

Guaranteed Income Analysis

An independent samples t-test was used to test if there was a difference between the treatment and control groups based on BPPS scores. The results are displayed in table 3.12.

Table 3.10: Median Monthly Income Statistics

	Overall Sample N = 215	Treatment Group n = 110	Control Group n = 105
Mean (SD)	$2,079 ($1,508)	$2,274 ($1,633)	$1,876 ($1,344)
Median	$1,790	$1,900	$1,500
Range	$0 - $7,161	$500 - $7,161	$0 - $6,505

Table 3.11: BPPS Item Response Percent and Score Statistics

	Overall Sample N = 215	Treatment Group n = 110	Control Group n = 105
Q1SolveCommProb	25%	24%	27%
Q2AttendLocalMeeting	25%	21%	30%
Q3GroupMember	18%	17%	20%
Q4AttendRallySpeech	14%	13%	14%
Q5PoliticalVolunteer	8%	9%	6%
Q6AttendProtest	8%	7%	8%
Q7VoteGenElection	76%	77%	76%
Q8SignPetition	23%	16%	30%
Q9ContactOfficial	19%	16%	21%
Mean (Standard Deviation) BPPS Score	1.93 (2.05)	1.86 (1.98)	2.01 (2.12)
Median	1	1	1
Mode (% of group)	1(37.7%)	1(40.9%)	1(34.3%)

Equal variances between the groups were assumed $F(214)=.610$, p = .436. There was a mean score difference of .146, with the control group participating in more activities on average than the treatment group. Although the scores of both groups were not statistically significantly different from one another, $t(213)=-.520$, p = .603.

Linear regression was used to test for an association between GI and BPPS scores, controlling demographics. The BPPS score was the dependent variable, and being in the treatment and control groups was the primary independent variable. The eight other demographic predictor variables included were race, ethnicity, gender, education, marital status, age, household size, and median income. The model summary and coefficients are displayed in the following two tables. Based on the results, the model predicted variance in BPPS scores ($R^2 = .095$ [.057 adjusted], $F(8, 193) = 2.52$, p = .012). Of the predictor variables, only education level was significantly associated with a change in BPPS scores, $\beta = .298$, $t(193) = 4.30$, $p < .001$. These results are displayed in tables 3.13 and 3.14.

The model was modified by replacing the race and ethnicity variables with the dichotomized race variable. This grouped marginalized racial groups to contrast the BPPS scores with white participants within this study. The overall model predicted variance in BPPS scores slightly better than the first model ($R^2 = .098$ [.067 adjusted], $F(7, 203) = 3.16$, p = .003). Again, education level was the only predictor variable significantly associated with a change in BPPS scores, slightly less so than in the first model, $\beta = .28$, $t(194) = 4.141$, $p < .001$. This information is found in tables 3.15 and 3.16.

Table 3.12 t-test of BPPS Scores by Group

	Treatment or Control Group?	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
BPPS Scores	Treatment	110	1.86	1.98
	Control	105	2.01	2.12

BPPS Scores: t(213) = -.520, p = .603.

Table 3.13: Regression Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.308	.095	.057	1.992	.095	2.524	8	193	.012

a. Predictors: (Constant), Household Size, Tx or Control, Gender, Ethnicity, Race(cat), Education, Marital Status, and Age.

Table 3.14: Regression Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients B	Unstandardized Coefficients Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	.938	.754		1.244	.215
	Treatment or Control Group?	-.181	.286	-.044	-.632	.528
	Marital Status	.123	.177	.051	.692	.490
	Education Level	.595	.138	.298	4.302	<.001
	Gender	-.100	.3140	-.022	-.319	.750
	Race by Group	-.012	.091	-.010	-.138	.890
	Ethnicity	.202	.308	.048	.657	.512
	Household Size	.031	.090	.027	.346	.730
	Age	<.001	.010	.001	.009	.993

a. Dependent Variable: BPPS Score

Table 3.15: Regression Model Summary (with race variable replacement)

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.314	.098	.067	1.982	.098	3.163	7	203	.003

a. Predictors: (Constant), Race(bivariate), Age, Gender, Age, Tx or Control, Education, Household Size

Table 3.16: Regression Coefficients (with race variable replacement)

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients B	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	1.308	.720		1.817	.071
	Treatment or Control Group?	-.158	.275	-.039	-.575	.566
	Education Level	.560	.1351	.280	4.141	<.001
	Marital Status	.152	.168	.064	.910	.364
	Gender	-.052	.307	-.012	-.171	.865
	Household Size	.037	.087	.032	.428	.669
	Age in years as of Nov 2019	-.001	.010	-.007	-.095	.924
	Race (Bivariate)	-.378	.328	-.079	-1.153	.250

a. Dependent Variable: BPPS Score

Exploratory Analyses

        The following section describes exploratory analyses of relationships between education, race, income, and gender with political participation, given their strong empirical and theoretical connections. These analyses utilize the entire sample to test for correlations and differences in BPPS scores. Since the analyses by education and racial group include five and six groups, respectively, the power of the results decreases, making the analyses on race and education underpowered. While exploring these factors was not the primary focus of this study, it will serve as the groundwork for understanding the study's results.

Income

        A correlation was used to test the relationship between median income and BPPS scores. The findings showed that the scores and income variables were not correlated significantly ($r(213)=.011$, p$=.867$).

Education Level Differences

        Education level was the only significant predictor of BPPS scores in the previous model, giving promise to further exploration. Another regression was run with education level and BPPS scores. The results showed education level predicted variance in BPPS scores ($R^2 = .084$ [.080 adjusted], $F(1, 213) = 19.574$, p $< .001$). This indicated that about 8% of the variance in BBPS scores is predicted by education level. Education level was also significantly associated with changes in BPPS scores ($\beta = .290$, $t(212) = 4.42$, $p < .001$).

        Considering the adjusted R square values, the nine-variable and eight-variable models predicated less of the variance in BPPS scores (adjusted $R^2 = .057$ and .067, respectively) than the education variable alone (adjusted $R^2 = .080$). This indicates the other variables may be hindering in predicting variance in BPPS scores in the overall model, with education compensating for them.

When looking at the mean differences of BPPS scores by education level for the overall sample, those with a graduate degree had statistically significantly higher scores than those with less than a HS diploma or GED (mean difference = 2.89, SE = .68, p < .001), those with a HS diploma or GED (mean difference = 2.61, SE = .62, p < .001), and those with some college but not bachelors (mean difference = 1.94, SE = .63, p = .024).

The following table, 3.17, shows the overall sample's mean BPPS score by education level. The table shows the percentage of the sample within each education category (% of Total N) and the % of BPPS scores within each education category (% of Total Sum). This shows that those with a HS diploma or GED or less disproportionately participate in fewer types of political activities. If respondents were proportionately participating, then the percents would be the same as one another by education level, but they are not.

Table 3.18 displays the means comparisons of BPPS scores between the varying levels of education. The largest differences were found in those who completed a graduate degree. Those with a graduate degree participated at statistically significantly higher rates than those who didn't attend college. Those with a graduate degree had a mean difference in BPPS score of 2.45 higher than those with a HS diploma or GED or less education.

Racial Group Differences

The racial breakdown of the sample included about 51% white and 29% Black folks with less representation in the other groups (10% multiracial, 7% Asian, 1.5% Pacific Islander, and 1% Native). The first comparison of groups did not find differences in BPPS scores by race ($F(5)=1.59$, p=.165). The created dichotomous race variable was used to compare white people and people of color in the sample by BPPS scores.

Table 3.17: BPPS Scores by Education Level

	BPPS Scores				
	Mean	N	% of Total N	% of Total Sum	Std. Deviation
Education Level					
Less than HS diploma or GED	1.28	32	14.9%	9.9%	1.591
HS Diploma or GED	1.56	89	41.4%	33.4%	1.544
Some college but did not complete Bachelor's	2.23	62	28.8%	33.2%	2.250
Completed bachelor's degree	2.71	21	9.8%	13.7%	2.795
Completed Graduate Degree	3.73	11	5.1%	9.9%	2.611
Total	1.93	215	100.0%	100.0%	2.052

Table 3.18: Comparisons of BPPS Scores Between Education Groups

(A) Education Level	(B) Education Level	Mean Difference (A-B)	Std. Error	Sig.
Less than HS diploma or GED	HS Diploma or GED	-.281	.408	.959
	Some college but did not complete bachelor's	-.945	.431	.186
	Completed bachelor's degree	-1.433	.556	.078
	Completed Graduate Degree	-2.446	.691	.004[*]
HS Diploma or GED	Less than HS diploma or GED	.281	.408	.959
	Some college but did not complete bachelor's	-.664	.327	.256
	Completed bachelor's degree	-1.152	.480	.119
	Completed Graduate Degree	-2.165	.632	.007[*]
Some college but did not complete Bachelor's	Less than HS diploma or GED	.945	.431	.186
	HS Diploma or GED	.664	.327	.256
	Completed bachelor's degree	-.488	.499	.865
	Completed Graduate Degree	-1.501	.647	.143
Completed bachelor's Degree	Less than HS diploma or GED	1.433	.566	.078
	HS Diploma or GED	1.152	.480	.119
	Some college but did not complete bachelor's	.488	.499	.865
	Completed Graduate Degree	-1.013	.736	.644
Completed Graduate Degree	Less than HS diploma or GED	2.446	.691	.004[*]
	HS Diploma or GED	2.446	.632	.007[*]
	Some college but did not complete bachelor's	1.501	.647	.143
	Completed bachelor's degree	1.013	.736	.644

[*]Mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Since this variable included those who identified as Latin or Hispanic in origin as people of color, only about one-quarter of respondents were considered white, and about three-quarters were people of color. Equal variances between the groups were not assumed $F(211)=5.603$, p = .019. The white group (M=2.39, SD=2.44) had a higher mean BPPS score than the people of color (M=1.80, SD=1.91), but the difference was not statistically significant $t(70)=-1.579$, p=.119.

Gender Group Differences

The study oversampled for non-male participants, which resulted in a sample of 71% women. Women (M=1.98, SD=2.03) had higher mean BPPS scores than males (M=1.89, SD=2.27). An analysis of the two gender groups revealed no statistical difference in BPPS scores, $t(211)=-.677$, p=.499.

Differences for Women of Color

The final analysis attempted to examine the intersection of gender and race within this study. The bivariate race variable was cross-referenced with the gender variable to create a dichotomous variable. The new variable represented individuals who identified as female and any race or ethnicity besides white (52.4%) and all who did not identify as both (47.6%). Women of color (M=1.83, SD=1.79) had lower mean BPPS scores than non-women-of-color (M=2.03, SD=2.03). An analysis of the two groups revealed no statistical difference in BPPS scores, $t(210)=-.713$, p=.476.

Discussion

This study was designed to test differences in political participation rates with a sample from a randomized controlled trial for guaranteed income. The results of this study showed that GI recipients participated in political activities at similar rates as those who did not receive the

money. This finding held when accounting for the other demographics variables except for education level. Increased education level was associated with increased political participation across the overall sample. This relationship has been found extensively in previous literature (Brady et al., 1995; Willeck & Mendelberg, 2022). This study found an association between education and political participation when controlling for getting the GI or not and other demographic variables, despite the null findings of the other covariates.

This study also described the differences in the sample's BPPS scores based on income, education, race, and gender. The study found no association between income, race, or gender when comparing BPPS scores. Further exploration of the education variable found that those who completed a bachelor's or advanced degree participated in almost twice as many activities as those who finished school with a high school diploma GED or before earning one. Education has enabled individuals to improve their overall health, well-being, and socioeconomic status, increasing their propensity to participate in politics (Brady et al., 1995; Cutler & Lleras-Muney, 2006; Hout, 2012).

Strengths and Limitations

Sample Demographics

The study purposively oversampled marginalized and underrepresented groups, including women (71%) and people of color (75%). The study sample overrepresented Black, Hispanic/Latin, Asian, and Pacific Islander groups but underrepresented Native American and American Indian populations. Still, Asian (n=14), Pacific Islander (n=3), and Native American and American Indian (n=2) groups had low sample sizes. Also, only one person identified as a gender other than male or female, leading to the omission of their gender identity in the study.

Another noteworthy part of the study is transposing the 14-option (plus write-in option) race variable from the SEED study to this study. This study used the five minimum required race

categories for the Census' race question (US Census Bureau, 2022). Also, like the Census, this study allowed individuals to choose one or multiple races. Participants could also write in as many additional races as possible. Many respondents selected or provided two or more races, developing the sixth race category as multiracial. The multiracial category is a catch-all, which may have masked the participants' race when they are categorized as multiracial rather than, for example, Black and Native. Historically, multiracial categories of race have been used to oppress and discriminate against certain groups and should be used cautiously in research settings (George et al., 2014). These issues may have hindered the study from picking up on nuances within the sample and data.

The two highest categories of education (earning a bachelor's and earning an advanced degree) were directly transposed from the SEED data for this study. One flaw in the data is not having an option between the two for those with some college beyond a bachelor's without earning an advanced degree. If someone wrote that, they would be moved to the earned bachelor's degree group.

This study was limited to using self-reported monthly income as the only other financially related measure to receiving the GI or not. Collecting the monthly income by text message was convenient, but some responses' accuracy was questionable. Respondents may have struggled with knowing what to include as income. For example, some participants who received the $500 monthly cash transfer reported incomes less than $500, even after explaining to recipients to include it in their responses. The income data collection required respondents to confirm their input amount, although many responses were still errant. For example, a respondent that typically responded with making about '4000' a month once responded that they made '400000' in a month. While they may have made $400,000 that month, it is much more

plausible that the respondent forgot to put a period ($4,000.00). The SEED research coordinator

contacted respondents about flagged responses but could not reliably correct these values.

The study was designed as a randomized controlled trial, an optimal way to conduct

between-group research to determine causality (Morgado et al., 2017). The study had a sufficient

sample size to test medium effect sizes between the treatment and control groups but could only

test larger effect sizes when analyzing groups by race and education variables that had six and

five groups, respectively. This may have influenced findings related to race and education.

Methodology, Missing Data, and Self-Report

The BPPS was used to measure political participation. It specifically measures how many

of the nine political activities a respondent has participated in within the last 12 months. The

BPPS fails to capture the extent of involvement in the political activities of the respondents. For

example, a person's only involvement may only participate in one type of political activity, like

volunteering with a political campaign but may do so for hundreds of hours. In comparison,

another person may spend five minutes signing a petition and donating five dollars to a political

campaign. The first person is arguably more engaged in politics but would score one on the

BPPS compared to two for the second person.

The BPPS was sent to participants in the lead-up to the general election, the busiest part

of the political election cycle. This was convenient for individuals to recall if they voted in the

general election but may have inflated participation rates overall compared to other years in the

cycle. The BPPS was designed to minimize the impact on a research-burdened cohort by being

short and split across three monthly surveys. This means respondents would have to submit three

monthly surveys to complete the BPPS, which likely contributed to 23.6% of responses returned

incomplete (216 completed at least one BPPS question and 165 completed all BPPS questions.

SEED's monthly surveys were typically responded to by about 210 individuals each month,

about two-thirds of the overall study population. This held true for the three months the BPPS was included, but it is not necessarily the same respondents each month. Sending all nine BPPS questions one time may lower the percent of incomplete responses.

Study Implications

Research Implications

Future research is needed to understand better why receiving the GI made no significant difference in political participation. In this study, the control group not receiving the GI had a marginally higher rate of political participation. One explanation may be that receiving $500 a month was insufficient to significantly move the needle concerning participating. Perhaps not enough time after receiving the cash had transpired for the benefits of it to be detectable in their political activity. That is to say that receiving consistent cash transfers may impact political participation, but only in more substantial amounts and for an extended period. As described by Mullainathan, Scarcity suggests that individuals facing a lack of resources, such as financial or material, prioritize addressing their basic needs, leaving little cognitive bandwidth for political participation. Consequently, satisfying these fundamental needs may be a prerequisite for individuals to become more engaged in the political process, particularly for women of color (Crenshaw, 1991; Mullainathan & Shafir, 2013).

Since this study found education as the primary driver of political participation, future research should target a GI to improve education outcomes, which may impact participation rates. To explore this subject further, researchers should consider studying the impact of consistent cash transfers designed to empower educational attainment. A cash transfer program could incentivize school attendance or offer extra funds to defray the cost-of-living expenses while in school.

Further, it would be valuable to study the short-term effects of providing pseudo-GI cash transfers to participants. Perhaps a study could provide cash based on attending or completing a politically centered educational session. The study could test how much cash will motivate people to participate in educational sessions by offering varying amounts to participants to attend and see if there is a difference in attendance based on cash amount.

Policy Implications

Policymakers can collaborate with people in their region to identify and address barriers to political participation. People can be limited from participating due to a lack of resources like money, education, knowledge, and access to politics. Policymakers may be able to address this by employing GI-like programs designed as a poverty reduction or prevention mechanism or actively empowering political participation. Although, the latter is relatively novel in practice.

The previously mentioned study of minimum wage showed increases of about $150 per month for low-wage earners increased voting by one-third of one percent. Unfortunately, results did not find overall minimum wage increases to effect higher-wage earners' voting habits. While improving many economic factors shows promise in improving political participation, no study has confirmed what amount of money or income is needed to improve political participation. Perhaps providing relatively larger amounts of unconditional funds for extended periods may be necessary to detect improvements in political participation.

In a more restrictive format, GI-like money could be consistent but conditional, required to be spent on something specific, like campaign contributions. Further, programs could be arranged to supplement income for civilians who want to take time off work to participate in political activities.

This study found education as a prime factor in political participation. Political participation rates increase when general and politically based education increases (Linos, 2013).

Future policies should focus on supporting people in increasing their education level, perhaps by subsidizing higher education. Also, providing political information and educational training on engaging in politics may be especially pertinent in correcting current inequities. For example, a political education program for immigrants may improve their know-how for engaging in politics and self-efficacy, although prior studies have focused on immigrant youth rather than adults (Humphries et al., 2013; Terriquez & Kwon, 2015).

Conclusions

The United States has a disproportionate poverty rate based on the prosperity of its economic system (Smeeding, 2006). When wealth is concentrated among a few people, political power tends to be concentrated similarly. Resource inequality (often due to privilege or oppression) is a major factor in why marginalized and low-income groups are restricted from participating in politics. These groups also face disenfranchisement through media manipulation, typically controlled by the powerful and wealthy few.

Many Americans face economic barriers to participation, for instance, having to work multiple jobs to make ends meet and not having free time to attend political events or stay knowledgeable on current political news (Schlozman et al., 2012; Leighley & Nagler, 2013). When financially stressed, people struggle to contribute money for political campaigns they want to support. In a healthy democracy, the government is tasked with providing equitable and inclusive treatment of its inhabitants, aiding them in political decision-making (Brady et al., 1995; Verba et al., 1995). Historically and currently, marginalized and oppressed groups in the US have not been afforded this treatment. Interventions must be utilized to aid in re-distributing political power to these oppressed groups.

The study was completed at the height of the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement, coinciding with the height of COVID-19 outbreaks. The COVID pandemic and the BLM movement have significantly impacted political participation in the United States in the last few years. The pandemic and subsequent lockdowns presented an opportunity to refocus scholarly attention on the politics of crisis. COVID highlighted the importance of political engagement and brought issues like healthcare and economic inequality to the forefront, prompting individuals to become more aware of political decisions and their consequences (Lipscy, 2020).

Simultaneously, the summer of 2020 witnessed an unprecedented wave of protests led by the BLM movement amid the COVID-19 pandemic (Turillo, 2021). These protests gained extensive media attention, surpassing coverage of other protests in the previous 50 years, and fueled conversations about racial inequality and police brutality (Arora, 2021; Eckhart, 2022). The BLM movement catalyzed increased political participation as individuals engaged in various forms of activism, including attending protests, participating in social media campaigns, and advocating for policy reforms (Arora, 2021).

Furthermore, the convergence of the COVID-19 pandemic and the BLM movement created a sense of urgency and interconnectedness between political events and public participation (Turillo, 2020). The amplified discussions and mobilization on social media platforms allowed for sharing information, organizing events, and raising awareness on a larger scale (Arora, 2021). However, it is essential to note that these events also led to divisions and polarization among different population segments, reflecting varying political responses and debates on issues such as public health measures, racial justice, and law enforcement (Turillo, 2020).

COVID and the BLM Movement have had profound and transformative impacts on political participation in the United States. These events heightened awareness, mobilized public engagement, and sparked conversations about pressing issues. They served as reminders of the interconnectedness between political events, social movements, and public involvement in shaping the nation's trajectory (Turillo, 2020).

CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

Throughout the profession's history, social workers have worked to advocate for the underrepresented and underserved. The profession has continued to address systemic discrimination and oppression in a wide range of ways. This dissertation followed that history in two ways: 1) creating a quick, low-cost, and accessible scale to measure political participation (BPPS), and 2) testing how supplying a GI may be associated with political participation. Receiving a GI provides its recipients an 'income floor' and may improve feelings of autonomy and decrease feelings related to resource scarcity. Based on the findings of this dissertation, more research is needed to understand how much of an income supplement is necessary to improve political participation rates significantly. Further research is needed to understand how to design GI programs to impact general or politically related educational attainment.

Throughout the history of social work, calls to action have been pivotal in moving large groups of social justice advocates. This paper calls social workers to action to address systemic economic and political discrimination and oppression. Social workers must call on politicians and community leaders to support a basic income, especially for those whose resources are scarce and have been minoritized. Guaranteed income is not a panacea but is extensively beneficial for providing an income floor and resources necessary to gain opportunities to participate in political decision-making. Moreover, social workers must participate in politics and encourage their neighbors and communities to influence change. Changes must be made individually and collectively to address and reverse the barriers in place in the current political and economic systems in the US.

Some researchers have explored the potential for intervening in participation rates through cash transfer programs, although seldom with unconditional GI programs. This research contributes to the literature by showing a related avenue for impacting political participation

rates by improving access to resources (albeit by education). This research aimed to normalize the concept of politically empowering people by economically empowering them. This work, along with the prevailing GI research from the last decade, continues to build evidence for the case of supplying a GI to vulnerable populations at-large. This study showed that doing so did not directly improve political participation rates, but education level did explain differences in political participation. Focusing on how GI may improve educational attainment and interact with one's ability to participate should be explored in future studies.

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