

# Supplemental Appendix for Measuring and Framing Support for Universal Basic Income

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Forthcoming

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<sup>1</sup>When the article is no longer *Forthcoming*, this will be replaced with the appropriate citation and consistent page numbers. The content will be identical.

# 1 Tabular Results

We include two attention checks (typing in the phrase “serious saxophone,” and moving a slider ruler to the number 37). We also account for the speed of completion of the survey (under three seconds per page). The data are analyzed in Table A.1. The main experimental results are largely identical if we analyze the full sample (left column) or just the respondents who pass all of the checks (right column). We default to analyzing all respondents. The Figures in the main text are produced using the estimates in the “Full Model” column of Table A.1.

Table A. 1: Predicting Support for Universal Basic Income from Value and Policy Manipulations

Variable	Full Model	Attention Subsample
Negative value treatment	-0.106* (0.057)	-0.119** (0.058)
Positive value treatment	0.081 (0.057)	0.092 (0.058)
Negative policy treatment	-0.165*** (0.058)	-0.127** (0.058)
Positive policy treatment	-0.029 (0.058)	-0.020 (0.058)
Party ID (Democrat)	0.395*** (0.081)	0.447*** (0.086)
Ideology (liberal)	0.111 (0.086)	0.063 (0.091)
Income	-0.064*** (0.008)	-0.068*** (0.008)
Economic retrospections	0.169*** (0.030)	0.186*** (0.030)
Economic propections	0.038 (0.029)	0.037 (0.029)
Concern for deficit (less)	0.113*** (0.022)	0.129*** (0.022)
Voted in 2016	-0.089 (0.055)	-0.081 (0.056)
Employed	0.133** (0.057)	0.151*** (0.058)
Education level	0.019 (0.020)	0.016 (0.020)
Negative value treatment * Party ID	-0.210** (0.092)	-0.201** (0.096)
Positive value treatment * Party ID	-0.029 (0.092)	-0.069 (0.096)
Negative value treatment * Ideology	0.279*** (0.097)	0.281*** (0.100)
Positive value treatment * Ideology	0.033 (0.097)	0.067 (0.101)
Negative policy treatment * Ideology	-0.153* (0.093)	-0.196** (0.097)
Positive policy treatment * Ideology	-0.096 (0.092)	-0.109 (0.097)
Negative policy treatment * Ideology	0.376*** (0.097)	0.400*** (0.101)
Positive policy treatment * Ideology	0.181* (0.097)	0.180* (0.102)
Constant	2.633*** (0.150)	2.536*** (0.153)
Observations	3,274	3,179
R <sup>2</sup>	0.254	0.266
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.249	0.261
Residual Std. Error	1.303 (df = 3252)	1.297 (df = 3157)
F Statistic	52.786*** (df = 21; 3252)	54.533*** (df = 21; 3157)

Note: \* p<0.1; \*\* p<0.05; \*\*\* p<0.01

Full Model only includes respondents who pass the slider attention check and do not speed through the survey.

## 2 Robustness check

There might be some concern that our treatments do not raise or diminish support for UBI specifically, but rather for social welfare policy generally. To this end, we conduct a placebo test: whether our manipulations affect support for government guaranteed jobs (the robustness test referred to in Endnote 8). While not an unconditional cash transfer, this is a particularly attractive placebo, as government guaranteed jobs are also a traditionally Democratic policy initiative, traditionally associated with social welfare, and traditionally touted to allay fears of unemployment (such as the guaranteed jobs in response to the Great Depression). We perform an identical regression, omitting the interactions between party identification/ideology and the treatments (as they were insignificant). The tabular results are shown in Table A.2.

Put simply: none of the treatments have any effect. Most of the estimated coefficients on the treatments are very close to zero, suggesting that prompting respondents to consider policy or value considerations about UBI did not bleed into a more general support for government social welfare programs, even those designed very similarly to UBI.<sup>2</sup> Instead, it was narrowly constrained to the specific policy issue we described.

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<sup>2</sup>The sample correlation between UBI support and support for government guaranteed jobs is  $r = 0.56$ .

Table A. 2: Placebo Treatment for Support for Government Guaranteed Jobs from Value and Policy Manipulations

Variable	Coefficient (Standard Error)
Negative value treatment	-0.036 (0.049)
Positive value treatment	0.030 (0.049)
Negative policy treatment	0.002 (0.049)
Positive policy treatment	0.021 (0.049)
Party ID (Democrat)	0.084*** (0.014)
Ideology (liberal)	0.224*** (0.017)
Income	-0.041*** (0.007)
Economic retrospections	0.183*** (0.026)
Economic prospections	-0.035 (0.025)
Concern for deficit (less)	-0.020 (0.019)
Voted in 2016	-0.068 (0.048)
Employed	0.094* (0.050)
Education level	-0.018 (0.018)
Constant	2.040*** (0.126)
Observations	3,274
R <sup>2</sup>	0.259
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.256
Residual Std. Error	1.148 (df = 3260)
F Statistic	87.471*** (df = 13; 3260)
<i>Note:</i>	* p<0.1; ** p<0.05; *** p<0.01

### 3 Experimental Details

Here, we outline with more detail the structure of our experiment. As a reminder, the experiment begins with a simple prompt about UBI:

Now we'd like to get your opinion on new policy proposal. There is a new policy being tested around the world called Universal Basic Income (UBI). This policy guarantees a payment of money to individuals from their government, regardless of need, qualification, or work.

Next came our experimental manipulation. There are two treatments given to respondents: an argument based on policy, followed by an argument based on values. In each treatment, there are three potential conditions: a positive condition (that UBI could solve policy or value considerations), a negative condition (that UBI exacerbates policy or value considerations), and a control (no argument for or against policy or values). Each respondent received one of the three conditions for each treatment. The experiment structure is more fully outlined in Table A.3.

Table A. 3: Summary of 3 x 3 Experimental Design

		Value		
		<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>	Control
Policy	<i>Positive</i>	+ policy, + value	+ policy, - value	+ policy, No value
	<i>Negative</i>	- policy, + value	- policy, - value	- policy, No value
	Control	No policy, + value	No policy, - value	No policy, No value

*Note:* each respondent was placed into one of the nine cells above.

## 4 Descriptive Results

### 4.1 Unconditional Support for UBI

Because almost all available data on UBI comes from private polling firms, most measures are manipulated by a private interest group for or against the policy. However, our double control condition in the 3 x 3 design allows us to assess support for UBI against a pure baseline with no framing effects whatsoever (those who were simply asked about their support for UBI without being primed for any positive or negative conditions). We examine the support for UBI in this control group in Figure A.1, split by partisanship and ideology. We begin with the most straightforward question: what does average support for UBI look like?

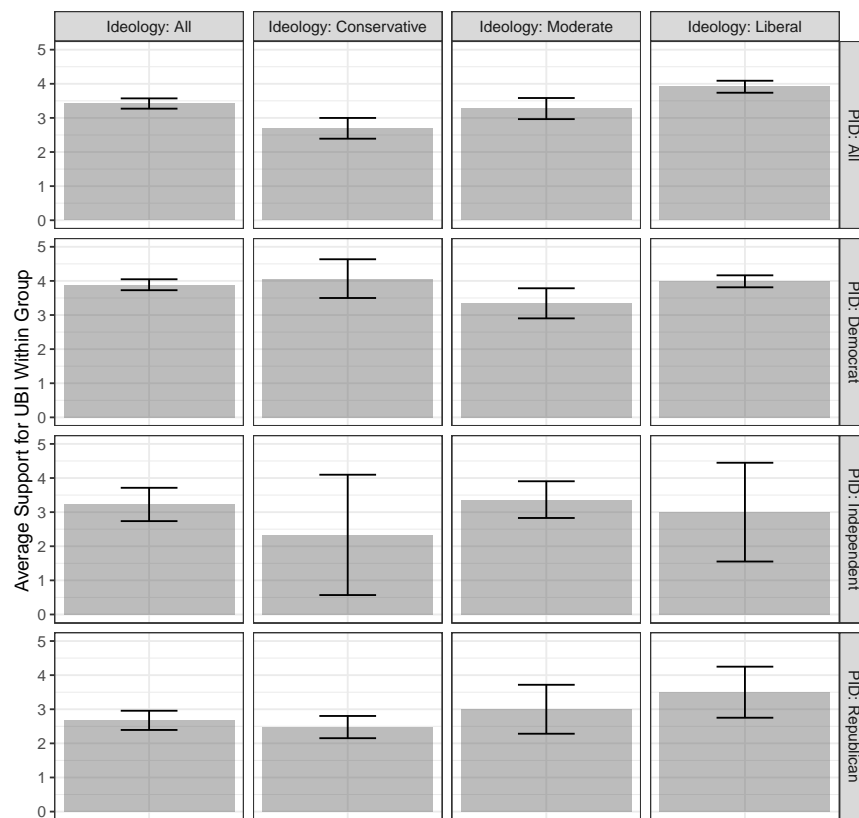


Figure A. 1: Baseline Levels of Support (in the Control Conditions) for UBI Across Party Identification and Ideology.

Overall, among our MTurk participants, UBI is a popular policy. Mean support among all individuals in the control condition (the top-left cell of Figure 1,  $n = 377$ ) is 3.42 on a scale of 1 to 5, indicating the MTurk sample is somewhat likely to support UBI. However, UBI is a partisan policy. Mean support among Democrats in the control condition (second row, first column,  $n = 214$ ) is 3.89; mean support among Republicans (fourth row, first column,  $n = 123$ ) in the control condition is 2.67, which is below the middle of the scale, indicating a lack of support. Additionally, these groups are statistically distinguishable from each other.

Independents (third row, first column,  $n = 40$ ) are between these two groups at 3.23: slightly leaning towards support. We reiterate this frame-free evidence is currently unavailable.

Our estimates are most uncertain for Independents, as there are fewer Independents in the baseline condition than either of the two other parties. Most Independents in the baseline condition (75%) are also moderate, leading to the wide uncertainty estimates for these two groups. In addition, support for UBI among Democrats is lowest among moderate Democrats (second row, third column,  $n = 35$ ). In fact, support for UBI among moderate Democrats ( $\bar{x} = 3.42$ ) is statistically different from support among liberal Democrats ( $\bar{x} = 3.98$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), which could present challenges in building support for the policy among a fractured Democratic ideological coalition. This difference is significant even with the relatively low number of individuals in the baseline condition. Again, it is important to note that this basic consensus about the partisan and ideological nature of baseline support for UBI currently does not exist in the scholarly literature. To test these expectations more formally, we turn back to our experiment. By randomizing both the type and direction of the arguments we present for UBI, we can directly test whether support for UBI is more conditional on policy or value frames, especially if those frames are positive or negative.

## 4.2 Open-ended Thoughts on UBI

To give context to the open-ended responses, we also create simple word clouds for each partisan group. In Figure A.2, we create wordclouds for each partisan group. Each has a minimum wordcount of 25. Subpanel 2a shows the wordcloud for Democrats, subpanel 2b shows the wordcloud for Democrats, and subpanel 2c shows the wordcloud for Republicans.<sup>3</sup> Across all three panels, we see two shared terms: “think” and “people.” This informs us that UBI is fundamentally a people-centered policy, among both its supporters and its detractors. Democrats are encouraged by the personal problems that UBI might solve for people; Republicans are worried about the lack of responsibility that UBI might create among recipients.

Among Democrats in subpanel 2a, the most common word mentioned among the 1814 respondents is “think” (979 times), along with “idea” (405 times, the fourth most common term), indicating an aspirational approach to the goals UBI sets to achieve. Sentiment is also distinctively positive: “good” is the seventh most common term (379 mentions), with “great” (170 mentions), “like” (328 mentions), and “support” (133 mentions) also dominating responses. Interestingly, value judgments do not make a strong appearance (i.e. “fair” and “equal” are not mentioned among at least 10% of respondents). However, many policy words are common: whether concerns about employment (“work,” 358 mentions, “income,” 308 mentions, “jobs,” 151 mentions) or broader growth (“economy,” 135 mentions, and “money,” 397 mentions), Democrats seem focused on the benefits of UBI as a policy initiative.

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<sup>3</sup>These are purely descriptive and not meant to support any particular causal inference. Additionally, they are drawn from all experimental conditions, though substantively similar to wordclouds drawn from just the pure control condition.





Among Independents in subpanel 2b, the most common word among the 357 respondents is “people,” mentioned 180 times. Independents also mention a relatively high proportion of ideational terms (“think” 152 times, “idea” 61 times, “believe” 26 times), but a relatively low proportion of terms about the values implicit in such a social welfare program (for instance, “fair,” “lazy,” “right,” and other similar terms are not mentioned among more than 10% of respondents). Instead, Independents seem focused on the policy role of administering such a program, mentioning “government” 66 times, “country” 24 times, and “taxes” 23 times.

Among Republicans in subpanel 2c, thoughts about UBI center primarily around *work*. Out of 1103 Republicans, the most common term (615 responses) is again the word “people,” followed next by 404 responses including the word “work.” Republicans also share a theme of not trusting the government’s role in the process: 224 responses mention the term “government” (the sixth most common term), the term “money” is mentioned 315 times, 74 mention the term “taxes,” and “socialism” is mentioned 50 times. Finally, Republicans are distrustful of the personal qualities promoted by UBI: 94 mention the adjective “lazy,” and 77 mention the term “hard” and “working.”

While these findings are merely exploratory, they indicate a surprising (to us) tendency for the policy debate to dominate the value considerations. To test these expectations more formally, we turn back to our experiment. By randomizing both the type and direction of the arguments we present for UBI, we can directly test whether support for UBI is more conditional on policy or value frames, especially if those frames are positive or negative.

## 5 Variable and Sample Information

### 5.1 Question Wording

Our variable question wording and coding is presented below.

UBI: “How likely are you to support such a program?” 1 = Not at all likely to support, 2 = Not very likely to support, 3 = Neither likely nor unlikely to support, 4 = Somewhat likely to support, 5 = Very likely to support, 6 = Don’t know / don’t want to answer.

Party ID: “Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as Democrat, Republican, Independent, or what?” Coded so -1 = Strong Republican/Not very strong Republican/Lean Republican, 0 = Independent, 1 = Strong Democrat/Not very strong Democrat/Lean Democrat.

Ideology: “When thinking about your political views, where would you place yourself on this scale, or haven’t you thought much about this?” Coded so -1 = Extremely conservative/Conservative/Slightly conservative, 0 = Moderate, middle of the road, 1 = Extremely liberal/Liberal/Slightly liberal.

Income: “The next question is about your total income in 2018, before taxes. This figure should include income from all sources, including salaries, wages, pensions, Social Security, dividends, interest, and all other income. What was your total income in 2018? Type the number: your best guess is fine.” Coded so 1 = Less than \$10,000, 2 = \$10,000 - \$19,999, 3 = \$20,000 - \$29,999, 4 = \$30,000 - \$39,999, 5 = \$40,000 - \$49,999, 6 = \$50,000 - \$59,999, 7 = \$60,000 - \$69,999, 8 = \$70,000 - \$79,999, 9 = \$80,000 - \$89,999, 10 = \$90,000 - \$99,999, 11 = \$100,000 - \$149,999, 12 = More than \$150,000, 13 = Don’t know / don’t want to answer.

Retrospections: “In the last 12 months, do you believe the economy, in the country as a whole, has gotten better, stayed about the same, or gotten worse?” Coded so 1 = Gotten much better, 2 = Gotten somewhat better, 3 = Stayed about the same, 4 = Gotten somewhat worse, 5 = Gotten much worse, 6 = Don’t know / don’t want to answer.

Prospections: “In the next 12 months, do you believe the economy, in the country as a whole, will get better, stay about the same, or get worse?” Coded so 1 = Get much better, 2 = Get somewhat better, 3 = Stay about the same, 4 = Get somewhat worse, 5 = Get much worse, 6 = Don’t know / don’t want to answer.

Concern for deficit: “When the U.S. federal government spends more money than it collects, the difference is called the federal budget deficit. The federal government currently has a deficit. How important is it to reduce the deficit?” Coded so 1 = Extremely important (to reduce the deficit), 2 = Very important, 3 = Moderately important, 4 = Slightly important, 5 = Not at all important (to reduce the deficit).

Voted: “In the election for president in November of 2016, did things come up that kept you from voting, or did you happen to vote for a candidate for President?” Coded so 0 = Did not vote, 1 = Voted.

Employed: “What is your main occupation? (What kind of work do you do? What are your most important activities or duties?) If you are not doing any work for pay at the present time, please indicate that.” Coded so 0 = Not presently working, 1 = Working.

Education: “What is the highest level of school you have completed or the highest degree you have received?” Coded so 1 = Less than 6th grade, 2 = Did not graduate high school, 3 = High school graduate or equivalent (for example: GED), 4 = Some college, but no degree, 5 = Associate’s degree, 6 = Bachelor’s degree (for example: B.A., B.S.), 7 = Advanced degree (for example: M.D., D.D.S., J.D., M.S., M.B.A., Ph.D.).

## 5.2 Randomization Checks

Below we show the means of each variable in the regression model by each condition of the experiment. The means are shown in Table A.4. The joint equivalence of the row entries across conditions is evidence of successful randomization.

Table A. 4: Variable Means by Experimental Treatments and Conditions

Variables	(-) Policy; (-) Value	(-) Policy; (N) Value	(-) Policy; (+) Value
Party ID (Democrat)	0.235	0.216	0.290
Ideology (liberal)	0.240	0.184	0.210
Income	5.833	5.630	5.384
Retrospections	3.100	2.981	3.132
Prospections	3.267	3.189	3.285
Concern for deficit	2.302	2.299	2.360
Voted in 2016	0.760	0.756	0.750
Employed	0.795	0.797	0.745
Education level	5.394	5.422	5.331
	(N) Policy; (-) Value	(N) Policy; (N) Value	(N) Pol; (+) Value
Party ID (Democrat)	0.266	0.241	0.128
Ideology (liberal)	0.209	0.204	0.120
Income	5.814	5.944	5.883
Retrospections	3.031	3.064	2.986
Prospections	3.220	3.249	3.180
Concern for deficit	2.309	2.263	2.275
Voted in 2016	0.729	0.751	0.725
Employed	0.780	0.782	0.796
Education level	5.294	5.355	5.450
	(+) Policy; (-) Value	(+) Policy; (N) Value	(+) Policy; (+) Value
Party ID (Democrat)	0.175	0.167	0.236
Ideology (liberal)	0.155	0.139	0.202
Income	5.875	5.897	5.866
Retrospections	3.042	2.989	3.034
Prospections	3.194	3.159	3.298
Concern for deficit	2.332	2.407	2.199
Voted in 2016	0.756	0.811	0.773
Employed	0.817	0.786	0.781
Education level	5.382	5.446	5.429

Cell entries are group averages.

+ is positive condition, N is control condition, - is negative condition.

### 5.3 Sample Demographics

The basic demographics of the sample are shown in Table A.5.

Table A. 5: Sample Univariate Statistics

Variable	Min.	1st Quartile	Median	Mean	3rd Quartile	Max.
UBI Support	1	2	4	3.37	5	5
Party ID	-1	-1	1	0.22	1	1
Ideology	-1	-1	0	0.20	1	1
Income	1	3	5	5.70	8	12
Retrospections	1	2	3	3.11	4	6
Prospections	1	3	3	3.30	4	6
Concern for deficit	1	1.5	2	2.37	3	6
Voted	0	1	1	0.76	1	1
Employed	0	1	1	0.82	1	1
Education	1	4	6	5.36	6	7
Female	0	0	1	0.51	1	1

*Note:* calculated from the full sample (all observations).