

Does the Unconditional Basic Income Promote Self-Actualization?

A Qualitative Study Based on Maslow's Motivation Theory

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Abstract

Introduction. The introduction of an unconditional basic income is widely discussed during the last decades. Psychologists are interested in how the basic income affects human flourishing. Flourishing refers to a state where people function on their optimal level and record a high level of well-being. An important component of flourishing, we use in this study, is self-actualization, a term introduced by the humanist Maslow. In the present study, the effects of the basic income are investigated in the light of Maslow's motivation theory. The present qualitative study employs a future-oriented approach, to investigate personal future-imaginings with a basic income. Aim of the study is to explore if the basic income is perceived to enhance people's ability to engage in self-actualization by enabling people to fulfill their needs.

Method. 13 letters from the future, written by an equal number of students and employees during the Future Now Workshop at the University of Twente were object of analysis. The participants were approached by means of convenience sampling. Their age ranged from 21 to 64 and the distribution of male and females was equal. They were instructed to imagine a situation in the future with a basic income where flourishing takes place. The letters were analyzed based on Maslow's concepts of his hierarchy of needs (physiological needs, needs for safety and security, need for love and belonging, need for self-esteem and at the top need for self-actualization). Utterances were rated according to their content as well as frequency of occurrence. Additionally, bottom-up coding was used to find components not contained in Maslow's theory.

Results. Needs of all five levels of the pyramid were found within the letters. Differences were found between employees and students. Employees often referred to how the basic income helps fulfilling the need of love and belonging, whereas students mainly wrote about the satisfaction of the need for financial security. In addition to Maslow's components other important needs are found such as travelling, rest and pleasure. Some of them seem to be other representations of needs described by Maslow.

Conclusions and Discussion. The basic income is perceived as a useful tool to enhance people's process of flourishing. By helping to fulfill needs the basic income offers improved conditions for self-actualization. Especially for economic disadvantaged people such as students the basic income seems beneficial because it offers financial security.

Keywords: basic income, flourishing, needs, Maslow, self-actualization

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Introduction

How would you spend your time if you would have an unconditionally secured income of 1000 euro a month? Would you continue working in your job? Doing nothing the whole day? Engage in activities you really like? Working in voluntary jobs? Discussion about a possible implementation of an unconditional basic income (UBI) raises questions like that. Opinions about the usefulness of the basic income differ greatly. In this paper especially the effects of the basic income on human's flourishing are studied.

According to Van Parijs (1992) "a basic income is an income paid by a political community to all its members on an individual basis, without means test or work requirement." (p.3) It is paid on a regular basis to all members of the society and replaces social assistance. It differs from the existing social security payments in three main aspects. First, it is paid on an individual basis rather than per household. Second, it is independent of other financial sources and thirdly, it does not require any work performance or willingness to accept job offers (Van Parijs, 1992). The Basic Income Europe organization (2017) further added the criterion that the income must be high enough to enable a decent living standard including taking part in the society and prevent poverty.

Unconditional basic income

This idea which attracts a lot of attention nowadays, has roots already decades ago. In 1516, the humanist Thomas More suggested in his book "Utopia" the implementation of a basic income to prevent poor people from becoming criminal to ensure their survival (Kranich, 2013). Also, the political activist Thomas Paine advocated the right of a basic income based on the idea that human rights are natural rights and justified to every individual. The term "basic income" was first established by the economist George Cole (King & Marangos, 2006).

Also nowadays the basic income has widely known advocates for example the founder of the dm-drugstore chain Goetz Werner who supports his opinion in the media (Werner, 2007). Furthermore, many Silicon Valley entrepreneurs are endorsing the UBI as a possibility to fight poverty and counteract the negative effects of robot automatization. For instance, the software Silicon Valley entrepreneur Martin Ford warns in this book "The Rise of the Robots" (2015) that the technological revolution leads to mass unemployment in all sectors. This has strong consequences for the individual as well as for the economy. According to Ford, already today "there is talk of deflation for the simple reason that the bulk of the population doesn't have

enough income to go out there and become vibrant consumers” (Ford, as cited in Smith, 2016, p. 53). Especially lower- and middle-class people will not have enough money to buy the goods cheaply produced by robots. As a solution to deal with this threat, he advocates a guaranteed basic income.

Also within the politics the UBI has advocates. For instance, the German Pirate party demands an “unconditional basic income for all to have a safe existence [and] be able to live your life as you want” (as cited in Cammaerts, 2015, p. 26). In Germany, a petition for the German parliament launched by Susanne Wiest received more than 50.000 signatures in favor of the UBI (Johach, 2012). While the German parliament closed the petition for the basic income, in Switzerland the parliament held a national referendum in 2016. However, the Swiss voters rejected the proposal of a UBI (Sage & Diamond, 2017).

Besides these positive aspects of an UBI, critics argue that it is too expensive and therefore not affordable. Another claim made against it, is the possible inflationary character of the basic income and the risk of reduced labor supply (Standing, 2011). Also, it is often said that it “gives the undeserving poor something for nothing” (Van Parijs, 2000, p.11). In addition, it is incompatible with the accepted principle of reciprocity which states that people who receive money, should react by making contributions (Van Parijs, 2000).

Effects of the UBI are already shown by a range of pilot studies. In certain villages in Namibia and India a pilot project over two years showed a positive impact of the UBI. Main effects were a healthier nutrition, improved health, better school performance, improved housing, more self-employment, decreasing criminal rates and higher perceived control of life (Standing, 2013; Haarmann et al, 2009) In Europe, Finland is the first country which pays basic income of 560 Euro to all unemployed citizens between 25 to 58 (Henly, 2017). Since the pilot projects are limited to a small population and conducted during a considerably short period of time the effects cannot be generalized. However, they give evidence that there may be a positive influence on the human’s well-being and quality of life.

Flourishing and the Motivation Theory of Maslow

In this paper, I wanted to study the perceived effects of the unconditional basic income on human’s potential of flourishing. The Well-being institute of Cambridge University defines flourishing as “a combination of feeling good and functioning effectively” (Huppert & So, 2009, p.1). Furthermore, it is linked to goodness, growth, and resilience (Fredrickson & Losada,

2005). Flourishing has many positive effects such as better relationships with other people, higher work productivity and improved learning outcomes, as well as improved health and a higher life expectancy (Dinner & Huppert, as cited in Huppert & So, 2009). These positive outcomes result in positive economic benefits due to less healthcare costs and better performance in school and work (Huppert & So, 2009). A famous theory about flourishing is the motivation-theory composed by the American Psychologist Abraham Maslow. For flourishing he used the term *self-actualization*. Maslow stated that people have several motivational systems which motivates them and which are not related to reward and unconscious desires (McLeod, 2007). He argued that people need to discover their own potentials and talents to be happy. For example, a Musician needs to play music otherwise he will be discontented (Maslow, as cited in Kranich, 2013).

Maslow represented his theory as a “hierarchy of needs” (Maslow, as cited in McLeod, 2007, p. 1). The most common version consists of five motivational needs classified within a pyramid and sorted according to their level of urgency (see Figure 1). The needs can be divided into basic needs or deficit needs and growth needs. As soon as one need is achieved, people strive to achieve the higher-order need, and so forth (McLeod, 2007). Maslow himself stated that “For the man who is extremely and dangerously hungry, no other interest exists but food. He dreams of food, he remembers food, and he wants only food” (Maslow, 1943, p. 374). The fulfillment of the basic needs is necessary to ensure the survival, whereas the satisfaction of the growth needs leads to improved health and well-being (Kranich, 2013).

The basic needs drive human’s behavior if they are not fulfilled. Basic and psychological needs need to be satisfied adequately before self-actualization can take place. Self-actualization is a favored process because people who can use their potential of self-actualization have a better well-being and can see life more objectively, accept themselves and others as they are. They have strong ethical standards and are able to form deep intensive relationships (McLeod, 2007).

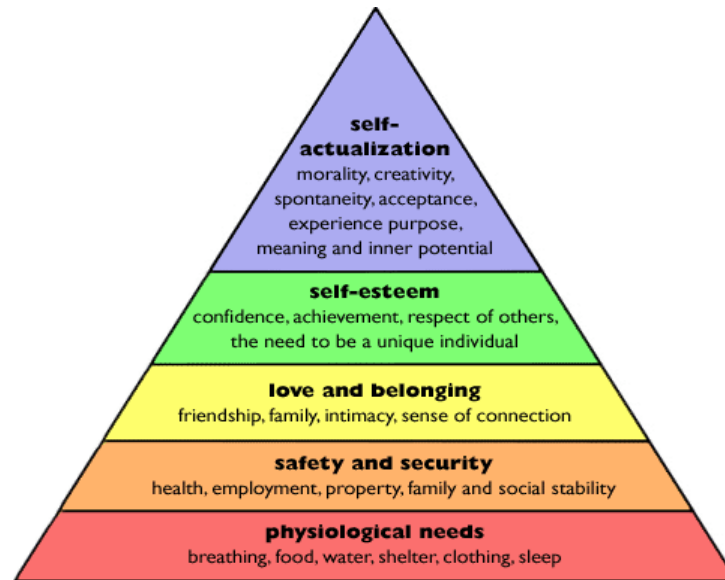


Figure 1. Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Anderson, 2012)

In light of the UBI Maslow's motivation theory is important because it emphasizes the role of self-actualization as well as circumstances under which self-actualization takes place. Advocates of the basic income argue that through the UBI these positive circumstances can be created and more people can reach the process of self-actualization. Trigg (2004) argued that if the income increases, people can fulfill their individual needs and move on to address higher order needs. The basic needs such as food and a safe environment can be fulfilled only through sufficient finances. The UBI can offer these finances, consequently people can strive for the satisfaction of higher needs such as their social life. Kunze and Suppa (2017) found that unemployment has negative effects on the participation in social interactions such as sports, social engagement, and cultural events. The UBI can improve the unemployment's situation because it dissolves social stigmatization by replacing unemployment benefits.

In addition, the UBI facilitates people to volunteer and appreciate such social engagement (Kranich, 2013). As stated by Kranich (2013) people who are active in voluntary projects show higher well-being than people who are not. He also highlighted positive effects on the solidarity within the community. Furthermore, the UBI is beneficial because it offers the possibility to discover own potentials and talents and accomplish them in everyday life. People are encouraged to find their own way rather than being patronized by other people, as mentioned earlier an

important condition to reach self-actualization (Kranich, 2013).

Moreover, the author stated that school and education can function as an instrument for the personal development rather than just a way to get a well-paid job. According to Kopatz (2012) education is a key aspect to happiness. The UBI gives people freedom and the financial means to invest in education.

Besides the positive effects on education and unemployment, the UBI does also improve the situation of employees. With an UBI employees would have more power to change work conditions because they are less dependent of the employers. Better work conditions in turn lead to healthier and satisfied workers which foster the development of self-esteem and self-actualization (Kranich, 2013). Critiques argue that people need extrinsic pressure such as financials to become an active worker. However, according to Maslow (as cited by Kranich, 2013) intrinsic motivations such as pleasure, self-esteem and respect are also important behavior stimulations. Maslow even stated that self-actualized people love their own work, and see no difference anymore between work and holidays (Maslow, 2010). However, this requires freedom to follow the own purpose. Finally, it is worth to mention that the higher the aspired goal within the pyramid of needs is, the higher the benefit for the whole community, because self-actualizing people act in a way which is favorable for the community (Kranich, 2013).

The motivation theory of Maslow is widely accepted and applied. However, it also became criticized due to various reasons. First, by treating the social environment as secondary in his motivation theory behind the basic needs of food and shelter, Maslow tends to underestimate the importance of culture and society in his theory (Jackson, Jager, & Stagl, 2004). According to Taylor et al. (2000) danger and hunger often stimulate people to build up societies. Also, people will risk their life to secure their belongingness (Leary, Tchividjian & Kraxberger, 1994). Another main point of criticism is that Maslow's theory is based on his subjective and limited research. He studied friends, public figures, students and analyzed the biographies of self-actualized people such as Albert Einstein and Abraham Lincoln (Kranich, 2013). Apparently, he just included "healthy, white men" in his studies. This approach is problematic because this categorization is quite arbitrary as well as subjective. It strongly depends on the researcher under which conditions a subject can be regarded as self-actualized. Because of that, the validity of the construct self-actualization can be questioned (Winston, 2016). In addition, his subject pool is restricted and limited to highly educated individuals and therefore cannot be

generalized.

In conclusion, the motivation-theory describes the needs which have to be fulfilled to engage in the process of self-actualization according to Maslow. There is some evidence found in literature that the UBI can enhance the fulfillment of needs and thereby creates positive circumstances for self-actualization. Bearing the limitations in mind, Maslow's motivation-theory still seems as a useful theory to study human's needs and self-actualization in light of the UBI.

Qualitative research and the benefit of imaginations about the future

Given that few experiences with a UBI are made, an exploring, inductive way of research was needed. Qualitative research is based on individual experiences, feelings, and behavior rather than on statistical procedures (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). According to them "qualitative methods can be used to obtain the intricate details about phenomena such as feelings, thought processes, and emotions that are difficult to extract or learn about through conventional methods." (p.11) In the current study, it was crucial to explore people's feelings and thoughts concerning the basic income, since we were interested in the psychological aspects and consequences on flourishing rather than the economic aspects. Therefore, it is interesting to gather individual ideas and thoughts of different people. This is especially important if we are interested in thinking and behaving under special circumstances (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Thus, a qualitative study is the most suitable.

In their paper Sools and Mooren (2012) highlighted the importance of futuring. According to them, it is an essential part of psychological functioning and defines us as human beings. Despite the fact, that imaginations about the future are less complete, vivid, and detailed than recollected experiences it is still a meaningful way to experience the future (Sools, Tromp & Mooren, 2015). An advantage of future imagination is that it is a common processes people are involved in which requires the interpretation of circumstances from the individual's current point of view (Sools, Triliva & Filippas, 2017). In the case of a basic income it is necessary to take advantage of future imagination because it is a situation which is not present in our society yet and can therefore only be speculated about. However, it is possible that it will be realized in the future. Since it is not possible to ask people about their experiences with a basic income, we can already explore people's imaginations about life with an UBI.

Intention of this qualitative study

In this study, I wanted to investigate how potential receivers of the basic income would use the basic income to satisfy their needs and thereby enhance their potential of self-actualization. In this context, I was also interested in which needs are most affected by the basic income and how the fulfilling of needs differs between different groups of people for instance employees and students. Due to the mentioned positive effects of flourishing, it is relevant for the society to approach this topic. Since literature demonstrated that the basic income possibly enhances self-actualization it is reasonable to study in what way the UBI enables humans to fulfill needs and thereby increases their potential of self-actualization. Due to the fact, that citizens are most affected by the basic income it is necessary to include them in the debate about a possible UBI. The present study enabled them to give an active contribution to this urgent topic and therefore supports a more democratic and reflexive approach to the basic income debate.

Methods

Introduction

In this qualitative study, I used letters about the future as future-orientated method of data collection.

Letter about the future

The “letter from the future” is a prospective reflection medium used within the narrative psychology (Sools, Tromp & Mooren, 2015). The individual is asked to imagine and write about a situation in the future from the current point of view. Letters about the future own the mentioned positive aspects of futuring. Furthermore, written letters have the advantage over narrative interviews that they are much less time consuming. However, it requires adequate narrative skills of the participants (Sools & Mooren, 2012). In this study, participants were asked to write about a situation in the future with a basic income where they feel satisfied and confident with the current situation. Furthermore, they were instructed to describe how they got into this satisfying situation. They could choose freely to whom they address the letter. Also, the point in time was chosen by the participant. To encourage participants to write letters about their future, we emphasized that no special writing skills are required and all letters are accepted.

The Future Now workshop

The data was obtained during two workshops of two hours each given by Anneke Sools, assistant professor of the Faculty of Behavioral, Management and Social Science at the University of Twente. The workshops were given at the University of Twente in Enschede, The Netherlands. The first workshop was conducted on April 03 and the second workshop on April 07, 2017. The study was approved by the ethics committee for Behavioral and Mental Science (BMS) of the University of Twente under the file number 17103. Aim of the workshop was to gather data about how people see their ideal future with a basic income. The workshops were given in Dutch.

Participants

In total 14 participants took part in the workshops, seven participants in each session. The first workshop involved employees, whereas the second workshop was given for students. The participants were approached by means of convenience-sampling. The age of the participants

ranged from 21 to 64. There was an equal number of men and women participating in the workshops. Most participants were Dutch, but also some international students mainly Germans took part in the workshops. However, all participants had sufficient Dutch language skills. The participants differed regarding their educational background, ranging from MBO to HBO, whereas most participants were either students or HBO. One participant was retired. The monthly mean net salary was for the students 750 euro ($SD=408$) and for the employees 3292 euro ($SD=2685$) per person. The participation was for all participants voluntary.

Setting

The workshops were given by Anneke Sools in a room located in the Cubicus. The location was quiet. However, the temperature was high because no windows were available. To make the atmosphere more cozy and informal decoration such as flowers were used. In addition, food and beverage was provided during the workshop. To guarantee a trustful atmosphere only two researchers were present during the workshop to operate the record advices and serve the participants.

Procedure

The participants were approached via different channels. They were partly acquaintances of the researchers and partly approached via third parties for instance ROC, the Dutch Centre for Vocational Education and Adults Education. They were invited via e-mail and received envelopes containing the material described in “research material used before workshop” (s. Box 1). Beforehand, the participants were asked to sign the informed consent and bring it to the workshop. After a short welcome and introduction about the procedure a short meditation session was held to facilitate participants to put themselves in the situation where a basic income is offered to each citizen. To make the UBI concrete and facilitate the imagination to live with a basic income we decided to use a monthly payment of 1000 Euros for every citizen older than eighteen years. After the meditation session, the participants had 20 minutes time to write a letter about the future with a UBI on the prepared letter paper. Participants were asked to imagine their ideal future with having a basic income. The moderator emphasized that no special writing skills are needed and every letter is welcome. She also informed the participants about the fact, that letters were read out loudly within the group afterwards. After the writing period, each

participant read out his own letter. The others were instructed to listen respectfully to everyone. Afterwards, the moderator asked everyone about their experience to write a letter, read it out aloud in front of the group and how they experienced it to listen to other letters. In the end, the participants had the possibility to talk about their workshop experience, give feedback and ask questions. Also, the moderator gratefully acknowledged that the participants took part in the workshop. To ensure anonymity the participants were labelled with numbers.

Before the workshop:

- 1) Description paper about the workshop
- 2) Instruction how to write a letter about the future without basic income
- 3) Document template for writing the letter
- 4) Carbon paper
- 5) Questionnaire about the demographics
- 6) Balanced time perspective scale*
- 7) Questionnaire about well-being (MHC-SF) *
- 8) Discretionary map about location
- 9) Informed consent

During the workshop:

- 1) Instruction how to write a letter about the future with basic income
- 2) Document template for writing the letter
- 3) Well-being questionnaire (MHC-SF) *
- 4) Zimbardo Time Inventory (ZTPI)*

Further Material: 3 cameras, audio recording equipment, pens, decoration, food and drink

After the workshop:

- 1) software Atlas.ti 8.0

Box 1. Material used in the study. *These materials are not important for the aim of this study and therefore not described in this paper.

Analysis

Steps of analysis. The analysis of the future letters took place as followed:

- 1) First, the letters were analyzed based on general aspects such as length, content, and noticeable characteristics to get an idea about the context and general situation in which the letters were composed.

- 2) Then, potentially meaningful fragments were assigned in a deductive way to the codes derived from Maslow's motivation theory. The motivation theory therefore offered a frame for the qualitative analysis. Each letter was coded separately. The fragments vary in length and are related to themes of the codes. If more than one code fits to a fragment, the most suitable code was chosen.
- 3) In addition to the deductive coding, if statements did not fit the themes derived from the motivation theory new codes are built. Therefore, the analysis was also inductive.
- 4) All salient findings which are important for the research aim were regarded within the results section.

The analysis is based on 13 letters. One letter contained only one sentence due to a writer's block and was therefore excluded from the analysis. The letters were digitalized and anonymized regarding places, dates, and names. To assure that the content of the letters remains original and reflects the intention of the author, the quotes for the analysis were retained unchanged and are therefore in Dutch. After the coding process the analysis was discussed with another researcher of the research team to reduce researcher bias. Therefore, codes of both researcher were discussed regarding their content and the linked utterances. Each researcher explained his own codes and gave some example quotations. The other researcher gave comment if the codes and linked utterances were reasonable and made suggestions if necessary. Furthermore, the anonymized letters were coded independently by another researcher who was not part of the research project and just got the code scheme necessary for the coding process. Overall, there was a substantial inter-rater agreement between the two researchers ($k=0,76$). Afterwards, the results were discussed and some quotes recoded, for instance the quote "*je passie achtergaan*" (27) which was first linked to the code pleasure became an utterance reflecting the need for experience meaning, purpose and inner potential. The code scheme is found in the following result section.

Results

General characteristics of the letters

The length of the letters varied from 156 to 263 words. One of the 14 letters letter was excluded from analysis as the letter only counted five words. The addressee of the letters was quite various but mostly referred to one individual. The letters were four times directed to the writer's self, three times not directed to an explicit person and in six cases to relatives such as children, sister, wife, or nephew. All letters refer to a point within the future where a basic income is realized. With two exceptions, in most letters the exact timepoint is not mentioned. However, it strikes that most participants wrote about a point in time where the basic income just exist for a short period of time for example two years. In most letters the author wrote about changes in the own life and social environment and own activities due to the basic income. Most future imaginations were positive. Only in one letter the author mentioned worries about the UBI. In fact, difficulties to manage the money were expressed. Mostly, the basic income was perceived as having a positive impact on the social environment and quality of life. It is noticeable that one letter did not have personal character but discussed the general impact of the basic income on the society.

Important Codes that were found in the letters

In table 1 which can be found in the end of the result section the code scheme is presented. The table contains a description of the (sub-)codes. Furthermore, it is presented how often specific needs were mentioned within the letters. Most needs derived from Maslow's pyramid of needs. However, some needs participants referred to are lacking in his theory. They can be found in the last column of the table. The numbers behind the quotes refer to the participant's number.

Codes derived from Maslow's motivation theory. In all letters, at least some of the components of Maslow's motivation theory were found. These are *physiological needs, safety and security, love and belonging, self-esteem* and *self-actualization*.

Physiological needs. The physiological needs such as food, shelter, sleep, breathing and drunk were mentioned rarely, namely 7 times. If named it referred mostly to *shelter*. One employee for example wrote about a situation with a basic income where she bought a house in

France (21). A student wrote about a future situation where he was looking for a flat in Amsterdam due to his study: *“Het duurde wel sommige weken een mooie woning te vinden. Maar op grond van de 1000 euro die je extra had elke maand was het duidelijk makkelijker dan je had verwacht”* (21). It seems that shelter is not defined as in Maslow’s theory where shelter is a basic need and refers to a protection against weather. It seems rather that participants desire high quality flats, housings as a second residency or apartments in good areas. Therefore, the quotes for shelter did not fit reasonable to the physical needs described by Maslow. The same applies with the code *food*. It seems that a basic income enhances people to have high-quality food as illustrated in this quote: *“We eten ook goed en vooral gezond.”* (15). However, it seems not to be the case that people need the basic income to guarantee their nutrition. The same applied to the basic needs sleep, water and clothing. These codes were not found in the letters. Thus, the basic income seems not to have an influence on the fulfilling of these needs. In total, physical needs were coded seven times.

Safety and security. In total the components of the need for safety and security were found 45 times. The sub-code *financial security* was mentioned most namely 20 times. In total, financial security was named by 9 participants, mostly students. In all letters, financial security was linked to the basic income. The participants often compared a time before the basic income was introduced with a situation where the basic income was already introduced. Common utterances which describe the situation without basic income were: *“We wisten niet of het financieel haalbaar was om een huis te kopen als mijn merk en uitkering helemaal weg zouden vallen.”* (12) or the quote of a student who talked about his academic career: *“Voordat het basic inkomen bestond had je veel over je toekomstige salaris nagedacht, en vast gesteld dat je salaris van een promovendus waarschijnlijk te laag zou zijn om een goed leven in [stad in Nederland] te kunnen voeren.”* (21) Especially students wrote about financial insecurity. However, this insecurity got dissolved due to the basic income. This was found in many utterances, for example: *“Ik hoef mij geen zorgen meer te maken of ik de rijns, stage lopen en al die festivals naar die ik ging kan betalen.”* (22) Additionally, the financial security offers new perspectives and possibilities. One of the students accredited his possibility to do a world trip to the obtained financial security: *“Dit kan ik doen omdat ik helemaal geen geldzorgen heb.”* (24) Another student wrote that due to the basic income she would have the possibility to reduce her debts: *“Het oplossen van de schulden is een stuk makkelijker”* (26). One striking difference between

students and employees is, that students perceive less financial difficulties with a basic income, while for most employees the basic income would even lead to a good financial situation. One employee wrote for example about her and her husband's financial situation with a basic income: *"We hebben het financieel beter dan ooit! We hebben beide een goed pensioen, AOW, en het basis inkomen."* (12)

The component **employment** was mentioned 8 times. Participants often mentioned their situation without a basic income where their jobs were unsafe as reflected in the following quote: *"Mijn werk was iedere keer onzeker."* (12). However, this situation got improved by the basic income: *"Ik voel me, alsof ik vrijer ben van lange verplichtingen zoals je ze eerder had ivm. zekerheid vor je baan."* (27). Furthermore, people use the basic income for own projects such as starting an own company. Also with a basic income it seems that participants are still motivated to work as illustrated in the advises: *"verdien je eigen geld"* or *"werk hard in je leven"* (17). The code **lack of concerns** was also found 8 times. It is striking that only student's letters contained this code. Furthermore, there is some overlap with financial security. For example, one participant wrote: *"Ik hoef mij totaal geen zorgen meer maken over de toekomst."* (24) Another participant also reminded herself: *"Maak je geen zorgen over je toekomst en geniet van het leven."* (22) The quotes indicate that lack of concerns is closely linked to financial security. If the students are in funds, they tend to have lack of concerns.

Family and social stability was mentioned 4 times. It seems that the basic income had a positive influence on social stability, for instance *"Er is vertrouwen in de samenleving."* (14). The need for **health** was mentioned mainly by the employees. One participant uttered for example in the context of robotic in the future: *"Mensen kunnen langer en zelfstandiger kunnen leven"* (14). Another participant wrote about a future where he is *"gelukkig gezond, zeg maar kerngezond."* (15). However, there were no utterances that link health directly to the basic income. Whether the UBI would enhance health was not apparent in the letters. One of the participating students even distinguished being healthy from having money and wrote: *"Los van het geld verhaal, ben ik nog steeds van mening, dat de rijkste mensen de gezonde mensen zijn. Want als je niet gezond bent, heb je helemaal niets aan het geld om je heen"* (26). Thus, health seems important for the participants but is not necessary bound to the basic income. **Property** was sparsely mentioned and therefore does not contribute much to the process of self-

actualization. It was mentioned only by employees and for example a *“huis in Frankrijk”* or a *“zwembad in de tuin”* (12).

Love and belonging. Utterances about the need for love and belonging were coded 22 times. *Sense of connection* was mentioned most. One participant wrote about a future where a basic income leads to more connection to his family because of shared activities: *“alle vakanties samen, onze hobby’s samen”* (17). It is reasonable to presume that the basic income enabled these activities as most of these activities require financial means. Another participant wrote about an increased feeling of connection by living *“met veel mensen samen in een commune”* (13) which seems to be indirectly connected to the basic income because the basic income enabled her to live in a community. Regarding other utterances, it seems not clear whether the basic income plays a crucial role for love and belonging, as reflected in the quote: *“Gelukkig ook met veel lieve mensen om ons heen.”* (15). Neither the utterances nor the context indicated that the basic income leads to increased feelings of connection. Instead, according to another participant the basic income may even intimidate the feeling of connection if not used in an adequate way. *“Het feit, dat je geen prestatie hebt te leveren voor een basisinkomen heft ook een gevolg voor de overheid. Minder control, minder regels – Hoe wordt je solidair met elkaar en hoe verlies je elkaar niet uit het oog.”* (14). This quote expressed concerns about the basic income with respect to the feeling of connection. The quotes for the code *friendship* often referred to activities together with friends. One of the students wrote for example about a journey with her friends (22) whereas another student can enjoy activities with family and friends more often (26). It seems that the basic income enables them to engage in this kind of activities more often and therefore benefits friendships. The employees referred to friendship as well. However, their utterances were less connected to the basic income, as in the quote: *“Gelukkig en met veel lieve mensen om ons heen.”* (15).

The same applied for the code *family*. The basic income seems to have a positive impact on the family by allowing for more common activities (26,17). However, to what extent the basic income accounts for that, is not always clear, as seen in the following statement: *“de relatie met [naam], [naam] en de kinderen is uitstekend”* (15). It is not clear in which way the basic income had influence on the relationship within the family. Finally, the sub-code *intimacy* was coded two times. One student wrote in the context of his future living situation: *“En ook jou plan, eindelijk in een gezamenlijke woning met jouw vriendin te leven wird realistischer omdat*

jullie jullie basis inkomen kunnen combineren.” (21) This quote emphasized the importance of the basic income for more intimacy. Also, one employee wrote about his and his wife’s future: *“Vanaf ons pension hebben we verstandig geleefd en veel gedaan. Heet veel vrijwilligerswerk, vooral ook samen.”* (15) It is noticeable, that the code love and belonging was found 19 times in the employee’s letters and only 3 times in the student’s letters.

Self-esteem. The code self-esteem was coded 39 times. The sub-code *achievement* was used most often, namely 12 times and was found in almost all letters. It is particularly apparent that most participants wrote about achievements which were only possible because of the basic income. For instance, one participant wrote: *“De dingen die voorheen moest laten liggen vanwege gebrek aan tijd en budget zijn nu in een keer opgelost.”*(16). Another person wrote: *“Ik leerde mijn vaste bestaan en waar ik echt aan hechte los te laten.”* (13) These two examples refer to personal achievements as most of the found quotes concerned with achievement do. However, there are also some general achievements or achievements reached by other people. For example, one participant wrote about his neighbor who succeeds to make the transition to organic farming (15). Furthermore, he referred to a general achievement: *“Nu is 80% van de melkveehouders biologisch. De eerste jaren naar een duurzamere wereld hebben we achter de rug.”*(15) This achievement is related to a whole population. **Confidence** was also a frequently used code. However, it is worth noting that it was almost exclusively found in the student’s letters. One student wrote: *“Als je verstandig met je geld omgaat, weet ik zeker dat alles goed komt.”* (25). This quote described a situation with a basic income where the person has trust in the situation as well as in his own person. Most of the quotes that were found reflected this state of mind.

The sub-code *autonomy* often referred to the feeling of being independent of others. For some participants, this independence has financial character, such as in the advice which the father wrote to his son: *“verdien je eigen geld”* (17). For others, it embodies the feeling of freedom and independence of social norms. However, autonomy does not mean the separation of others. One employee wrote for instance about himself and his wife: *“Altijd samen maar ook onze eigen hobby’s en eigen vrienden.”* (15) Thus, feeling autonomous does not exclude the feeling of connection with other people. However, this opinion was not shared by all participants. For instance, one participant mentioned that the rise of robotics leads to more autonomous people which is according to him a threat for solidarity. (14)

The sub-code *respect to others*, which is according to Maslow also part of self-esteem, was only found in three letters. One letter where respect to others plays an important role was written by an employee who directed his letter to his son. He wrote about a scenario where his son set up his own company. He expressed his respect for his achievement (17) but also advised him to respect other people: “*Denk ook aan de mensen om je heen. Niet alles zelf opmaken, he.*” (17). The sub-code *need to be a unique individual* was coded for employees and students with equal frequency. The code seems to be related to autonomy but is even more focused on personal development. One woman wrote for example about a future where she is travelling by sailboat on her own: “*Moeilijke tijden alleen op zee waar ik mezelf tegen kwam.*” (13). Also, one of the students wrote about her traveling experiences and how she gained knowledge about herself: “*Jezelf beter te leren kennen.*” (22) It seemed that individuality plays an important role for him. One of the employees stated generally that: “*Het basis inkomen kan leiden tot meer individualiteit.*” (14) Apparently, he is not referring to his own person. However, this was an exception.

Self-actualization. Codes related to self-actualization were found 42 times. The sub-code *experience purpose, meaning and inner potential* recurred often and was found 17 times. For some participants the focus of their letter was about a future where they experience purpose, meaning and inner potential. In one student’s letter for example this code was found 5 times. Utterances concerning this code were mostly positive and involve pursuing passions. One student wrote for example: “*Door het basis inkomen kond ik de droom van een wereldrijks waarmaken en ben nu al overall geweest.*” (24) Another student wrote: “*All in all is het leuk om nu de mogelijkheid te hebben je passies achter te gaan. Dit is altijd een fundamenteel belang van jouw geweest-verlies dit perspectief niet.*” (27).

These examples showed that passion is highly important for the participants and enhance their quality of life. Different passions were mentioned such as travelling (24), “*personlijke projecten*” (27) or “*kunnen investeren in het bouwen van een school in [land] en weeskinderen daar helpen een toekomst te bouwen.*” Thus, the purpose and inner potential of the participant is highly variable, but has in common that it describes the fulfilling of their individual dreams or as one participant wrote “*a dream come true*” (22). Furthermore, it is striking that the basic income is perceived as giving them the possibility to live their passions. Many participants compared their situation without a basic income with a situation where the basic income already exists. It

becomes evident that without basic income it was not realizable to live their dreams. One participant wrote for instance:

“Je voelde altijd een bepaalde druk om dingen te doen, die voor anderen heel erg normaal waren, zoals het voorbereiden op een leuke baan, die je ook zekerheid geeft. Maar deze situatie is veranderd. Ik voel me nu veel vrijer in mijn beslissingen en mogelijkheden. Er is nu een vast basisinkomen voor iedereen.” (27)

This quote shows that the participant did not feel able to act freely without a basic income because of social expectations. However, the UBI took this pressure off. The experienced pressure without basic income is shared by other participants. Another participant wrote for instance about his situation without basic income: *“Waar je nu bent, ervaar je nog veel druk en voel je je nog niet vrij om te doen wat je erg leuk lijkt.” (24)*. This situation changed with the UBI and the participant fulfilled his dream of a world trip. The experienced feeling of freedom to find the own purpose in life was also comprehensively described by the following utterance of one employee who studied art:

”Eindelijk kon je still staan en bekijken wat erg waarde heeft en gek genoeg zijn dat juist de dingen die je al die tijd onvrijwillig moest verwaarlozen puur omdat je die vrijheid toen niet had. Je hebt eindelijk de kans gehad om te investeren in de toekomst waar je vier jaar lang voor hebt gestudeerd maar ook gefantaseerd.” (16)

All in all, it is evident that the basic income had both for students and employees an important influence on the experience of meaning, purpose and inner potential. The content of the utterances concerning the code experience purpose, meaning and inner potential could be summarized by the following statement: *“Ik denk dat het basis inkomen voor veel mensen een reden is geweest om te doen wat zij het liefst wilden.” (15)*

Morality was coded 4 times. One father advised his son to use the money in an ethical way: *“Denk je ook aan de mensen om je heen. Niet alles zelf op maken, hé?”* and *“daar waar nodig help de mensen om je heen als je het self goed hebt en wat missen kann“ (17)*. For this participant morality is closely linked to helping other people. This link was found in almost all utterances, one student wrote for example: *”Nietdestemin heb ik ook het gevoel dat ik ook iets terug wil geven voor wat ik krijg, dus probeer ik ook regelmatig door vrijwilligerswerk of andere bijdragen de goede intenties door te geven.” (27)* Also, this form of morality refers to treating others good.

The sub-code *creativity* was only found in employee's letters. It seems that the basic income gives space for more creativity for instance for "*het prepareren van de groentetuin.*" (15) However, according to another participant creativity is also necessary to benefit from the basic income: "*Samenlevingsnormen zullen veranderen. Hoe dat gaat form vinden zal afhangen van creative features en werkwijzen als samenleving van elkaar.*" (14) Here, creativity seems to be necessary to deal with changing social norms. *Acceptance* was only coded by one participant and referred to the situation without the UBI. He stated that the basic income is convenient but he also is aware of the basic income not being reality yet. He pointed out that even without basic income he needs to enjoy life: "*Hoewel het basis inkomen fijn is en je dit nu nog niet hebt, moet je ook nu niet vergeten te genieten van het leven.*" (24) He accepts the fact that he has not the financial means to travel yet and mentioned: "*Niet alleen aan de andere kant van de wereld is het mooi.*" (24) It illustrates that he would prefer a life with a basic income but also accepts the current situation without a basic income.

The sub-code *spontaneity* could not be found in the analyzed letters. The sub-codes travelling and volunteering were not explicitly mentioned within Maslow's pyramid. However, they seem to be more concrete forms of the need for self-actualization. Utterances about *travelling* were found 8 times. Most of them were found in the student's letters. The kinds of travelling ranges from short trips, for instance "*met de fiets naar het buitenland*" (15) or "*een week kerstvakantie in een warm land*" (23) to trips around the world: "*Door het basis inkomen kon ik de droom van een wereldrijs waarmaken en ben nu al overall geweest.*"(24) The last code *volunteering* was found 3 times. One student wrote: "*Nu werk ik al een paar weken als vrijwilliger in een olifantenopvang midden in de Rimba van Afrika.*" (24) Whereas, one of the employees wrote about volunteering with his wife after their retirement. (15) Considering the whole theme of self-actualization, it appeared that self-actualization was found slightly more in the student's letters than in the letters written by the employees.

Codes that are not part of Maslow's motivation theory.

The results described in the following paragraph were outcomes of the bottom-up coding. They are perceived as important by the participants but are not part of Maslow's motivation theory.

Education. Utterances about education were only found in three of the student's letter. For one student education seems the most important aspect. He wrote about his academic career enabled by the basic income: "*Je hebt je Master afgerond in Amsterdam en gaat in sommige weken beginnen te promoveren.*" (21) Another student wrote about an internship which was only feasible due to the basic income. (22)

Well-being. This code was found three times. One student for instance finished his letter with writing about how the basic income enables him to live out his passions: "*met veel tevredenheid*" (27) A women who imagined a situation travelling by sailboat wrote: "*Het gaat me goed nu, ben in een situatie beland waar ik me erg goed voel.*" (13) Well-being seems to be a consequence of the life the individual could only realize by support of the UBI.

Pleasure. Utterances referring to pleasure were found 9 times. Most of them included leisure activities which the participant enjoyed such as sports. Most participants remained vague with respect to their activities. There were many utterances as: "*Ik kan gewoon doen wat ik leuk vind.*" (22) of "*ik kan vaker wat leuks gaan doen met mijn familie.*"(26) or the advice one participant gave to her nephew: "*Vergeet alleen niet om ook lol te hebben.*" (25) It became clear that pleasure is important for them. However, which activities lead to experience of pleasure remained open. Other participants were more precise in describing their pleasure spending activities, as reflected in the following utterances: "*(...)het racen met onze motoren.*" (17)

Rest. This code was found 8 times. For one student rest seems the predominant component linked to the UBI. In particular, having more spare time is for her a benefit of the basic income: "*Nu zijn acht maanden afgelopen en ik geniet van meer vrije tijd omdat ik minder naast mijn studie moet werken.*" (23) Furthermore, she experiences more inner peace because of the basic income: "*Ik voel me op dit moment heel rustig omdat ik niet meer zo veel over geld moet nadenken.*" (23) Another participant wrote about fewer experience of pressure: "*Het probleem van altijd te druk zijn ken ik nu totaal niet meer, want er is geen druk meer om heel veel te presenteren.*" (24) This experience is shared and added by another participant who stated that having more rest leads to less stress and therefore, allowed for better time management. (16)

This utterance makes clear that less pressure can lead to better productivity. Most utterances were made on an individual level. However, one participant refers to rest on the labor market:

“Er is veel meer rust in de maatschappijen op de arbeidsmarkt.” (12)

Table 1

Needs mentioned by the participants based on Maslow's pyramid of needs

Codes (frequency)	Sub-codes (frequency)	Description of the codes	Example quotes
Physiological needs (7)	a) breathing (0)	The physiological needs breathing, water, food, shelter, clothing, and sleep are unambiguous and are coded when the fragment refers to such basic needs.	Example for shelter:
	b) water (0)		<i>Toen we nog bezig waren om huizen te kijken en te kopen maakte ik me weleens zorgen over of het allemaal wel te betalen zou zijn voor ons.</i>
	c) food (1)		
	c) shelter (6)		
	d) clothing (0)		
Safety and security (45)	a) health (4)	coded when the fragment refers to health related topics either if a person's health is at risk without basic income or ensured in the case of a basic income	<i>Gelukkig gezond zeg maar kerngezond.</i>
	b) employment (7)	coded when the basic income would have a positive influence on the person's employment status or if the employment was at risk without having a basic income.	<i>Mijn werk was iedere keer onzeker.</i>
	c) property (2)	Is coded, if a statement refers to material belongings	<i>We hebben een zwembad aan laten leggen in de tuin.</i>
	c) family and social stability (4)	Refers to stability in a wider context such as the community as well as on family level. It is coded if there is perceived lack of family and social stability in a condition without basic income or if it would be positive in the case of basic income.	<i>Ik leef met veel mensen samen in een commune.</i>

	d) financial safety* (20)	It refers to financial security due to the basic income.	<i>Mijn spaargeld meegenomen en verzekerd van een inkomen.</i>
	lack of concern* (8)	Is coded when the author writes about a state in which he does not experience many worries.	<i>Ik hoef mij totaal geen zorgen te maken over de toekoms.</i>
Love and belonging (22)	a) friendship (4)	Is coded when the quote contains utterances about friendship.	<i>Gelukkig en met veel lieve mensen om ons heen.</i>
	b) family (4)	It refers to the feeling of belongingness and love for the own family.	<i>De relatie met XXX, XXX en de kinderen is uitstekend.</i>
	c) intimacy (2)	Coded when the basic income seems to have an influence on either physical or emotional intimacy- a state of high interpersonal trust.	<i>Een ook jou plan, eindelijk in een gezamenlijke woning met jouw vriendin te leven is wird realistischer omdat jullie jullie basis inkomen kunnen combineren.</i>
	d) sense of connection (12)	Refers to the author's feeling to be part of the community	<i>Er is solidariteit om samen zaken op te pakken.</i>
Self-esteem (39)	a) confidence (7)	Is coded when the individual would believe in his own power.	<i>Moelijke tijden alleen op zee waar ik mijzelf tegen kwam.</i>
	b) achievement (14)	Is given when the participant writes about the fulfillment of aspired goals.	<i>Je hebt je master afgerond in (stad in Holland) en gaat in sommige weken beginnen met promoveren.</i>
	c) respect to others (6)	It refers to the feeling of appreciating other people and treat them well.	<i>Waarde als respect, luisteren naar meningen van anderen staan hoog op de agenda.</i>
	d) the need to be a unique individual (4)	Is coded when the author describes the desire for individuality.	<i>Het basis inkomen kan leiden tot meer individualiteit.</i>
	Autonomy* (8)	Is coded if the individual refers to a state of functioning independently from other people.	<i>Altijd samen maar ook onze eigen hobby's en eigen vrienden.</i>
Self-actualization (42)	a) morality (7)	Refers to statements where a behavior is conducted based on the premise that it is the proper behavior.	<i>Denk ook aan de mensen om je heen. Niet alles zelf opmaken, hé?</i>

	b) creativity (3)	It refers to the individual's potential to act out his own creativity.	<i>Samenlevingsnormen zullen veranderen. Hoe dat gaat vorm vinden zal afhangen van creative features en werkwijzen als samenleving van elkaar.</i>
	c) spontaneity (0)	It refers to individual natural, often unplanned actions.	-
	e) acceptance (2)	Is coded when the participant values his own person and other people with all existing strengths and weaknesses.	<i>Niet alleen aan de andere kant van de wereld is het mooi.</i>
	d) experience purpose, meaning and inner potential (19)	Encompasses the feeling that an individual successfully fulfills his own purpose.	<i>All in all is het leuk om nu de mogelijkheid te hebben je passies achteraan te gaan.</i>
	e) Travelling*(8)	It is coded when the individual writes about travelling.	<i>Ik zit met twee vrienden in een vliegtuig en we zijn benieuwd omdat nog niemand van ons in Marokko is geweest.</i>
	f) Volunteering* (3)	It refers to all kind of voluntary work which is not paid.	<i>Zo werk ik nu al een paar weken als vrijwilliger in een olifantenopvang midden in de rimba van Africa.</i>
Codes not included in Maslow's theory (25)	a) Education* (5)	Is coded when the participant writes about gaining knowledge and topics referring to school, university, or other kind of education.	<i>Nadat ik mijn bachelor heb gehaald ging ik stage lopen voor 6 maanden.</i>
	b) Well-being* (3)	Is coded when the individual writes about a state of well-being and satisfaction.	<i>Met veel tevredenheid.</i>
	c) Rest* (8)	This code refers to a state of calmness.	<i>Mijn bodschap voor jij in het heden is eigenlijk dat je je een klein voorbeeld aan mijn rustigheid neemt en oplet dat je altijd genoeg tijd hebt voor mooie zaken daarmee de plezier en de rustigheid niet te kort komt.</i>
	d) Pleasure* (9)	Is coded when the author refers to activities which give enjoyment.	<i>Maar kan gewoon doen wat ik leuk vind.</i>

Note. *codes are built via bottom-up approach; thus they are not included in Maslow's motivation theory

Discussion and Conclusion

The aim of this paper was to investigate whether the participants feel more confident to fulfill their personal needs and thereby enhance the conditions for self-actualization if they would receive a basic income. The results provide evidence for the assumption that the UBI is perceived as helpful in fulfilling human's needs. Participants also showed more aspects of self-actualization when thinking about a future with a basic income. Maslow built his theory in 1943 to describe how people's behavior is motivated and how they engage in self-actualization. Even though these aspects play an important role with respect to flourishing with a basic income, the motivation theory was not specifically designed for this aim. However, it became evident that all needs (physiological needs, safety and security, love and belonging, self-esteem) were mentioned in the letters, when participants described a situation where self-actualization takes place. Therefore, it is reasonable to describe optimal conditions for self-actualization as a state in which the lower needs are fulfilled. Also, evidence for the hierarchical order of needs was found. Especially students wrote that they feel restricted in finding their purpose in life and live out their passion because of financial insecurity without UBI. This provides support for the presumption that self-actualization is only possible if the other needs are fulfilled adequately.

However, the theory also has some shortcomings in explaining flourishing in light of the UBI. All components built by Maslow were found. However, some additional needs were identified which were not part of Maslow's pyramid. Thus, two different kinds of needs were found which could not be described solely by the pyramid of needs. First, needs were identified which were not mentioned explicitly within the hierarchy of needs but which are related to the main components of the motivation theory. The needs for financial security and lack of concerns for example can be classified as safety and security needs. Maslow's theory contains a subcomponent namely employment which is related to financial security. However, the need for financial security differs from the need for employment, in a way that financial safety does not necessarily require employment and therefore reciprocity. It seems that in the perception of the participants financial security is not necessarily bound to employment. This is rather a modern point of view and was possibly not accepted during the time Maslow developed his motivation theory. Additionally, the themes volunteering and travelling were important aspects of a future in which flourishing takes place. These were lacking in Maslow's pyramid. However, it can be argued that these are more concrete operationalizations of the need for experience purpose,

meaning and inner potential and therefore indirectly addressed by Maslow's theory. We also must take into consideration that the theory was built in a time when travelling was not a common activity.

The same applies for some of the physical needs. Nowadays, people in developed countries barely suffer from hunger and homelessness. When participants referred to physical needs such as shelter they thought about comfortable houses and luxury rather than solely protection against weather. This gives rise to the necessity to revise Maslow's theory with respect to physical needs. Nowadays, citizens of welfare countries regard luxury and comfort such as high-speed internet connection and computer usage as basic need. According to an international BBC survey implemented in 26 countries, four of five people perceived internet as a fundamental right (BBC, 2010). This view is shared by the United Nation Organization who declared internet access as a human right (Perkins, 2012).

The other kind of needs people referred to and were lacking in the hierarchy of needs were rest, education, pleasure, and well-being. The need for well-being is indirectly addressed by Maslow, as he stated that the fulfillment of the own potential would lead to well-being. Therefore, well-being accompanies self-actualization. Yet, the needs for rest and pleasure are still missing within the theory which forms an important weakness of Maslow's theory. According to Costa et al (2004) are periods of rest crucial for the human wellbeing. This is supported by the fact, that many participants assign high priority to this need.

A final important shortcoming is the underestimation of the role of the need for love and belonging. In Maslow's pyramid, it is one of the needs which need to be fulfilled to engage in self-actualization. However, based on the letters, for many participants, mainly employees, love and belonging seems to be the best premise for flourishing, even more important than self-actualization. This finding can be interpreted in two ways: Firstly, the need for love and belonging might be more important for some participants than the need for self-actualization. The second possible interpretation might be that love and belonging is an important component of self-actualization and therefore on the same level in the pyramid. Both explanations give evidence that the need for love and belonging requires more attention than it gets in Maslow's theory.

Overall, despite some limitations Maslow's motivation theory is effective in describing self-actualization in light of the UBI. Therefore, it is reasonable to approach the main research

aim, namely if the basic income promotes people to engage in self-actualization. The results allow the conclusion that the UBI is perceived as enhancing the process of self-actualization by facilitating the fulfillment of needs. Only the fulfillment of the physiological needs such as food and shelter was barely found. A possible explanation for this finding is that in the Netherlands there is already a high living standard (OECD, 2015). People generally do not suffer from hunger or homelessness even if no basic income is implemented. Also with respect to the polled sample, it is important to mention that none of the participants lives in poverty.

Many of the student participants described that they felt restricted in attaining their goals such as academic achievements, travelling or own projects due to lack of financial means. A study conducted by the Ohio State University found that 70 % of the students feel stressed about their finances (Grabmeier, 2015). Economic insecurity leads according to Evans and Schamberg (2009) to stress and therefore conflicts with the ability to learn by impairing the working memory. Since these economic problems and their consequences are based on a shortage of money they can be solved through financial funds such as the UBI.

Also for the need of employment the basic income is important as it is perceived as an appropriate way to ensure financial stability. However, the analysis of the letters showed that other aspects are equally important. People want to find work which they like and which fits their own potentials. Participants wrote about how the basic income enables them to work on own projects such as building up their own company. None of the participants wrote about giving up their work. Rather, they imagined a future where they work on own projects or do voluntary work. This outcome highlights that people have other intrinsic motivations to work than money. Therefore, the critiques on the UBI that people would lose their willingness to work, can be rejected. The basic income can even have a positive effect on employment because it enables people to hold on a job which matches their interests.

Also with respect to the need for love and belonging the UBI is useful even though it is immaterial. In the introduction, the negative effects of unemployment on the fulfilling of social needs were already discussed. However, the current outcomes indicated that the positive effects of the UBI are not restricted to unemployed. Both students and employees described in their letters a situation where they have a good relationship to friends and family. The results showed that the UBI can promote social relationships indirectly by enabling more social activities such as shared trips due to the basic income gives the financial means to enable these activities.

Furthermore, with a UBI people can reduce their working hours and spend more time with their family and friends. However, in some letters no link between the basic income and social belonging was found. A possible explanation might be that the UBI only has influence on social relationships if a shortage of money restricts them from socializing, for example if shared activities are not possible because of limited time or insufficient finances. Other than that, the basic income seems not to contribute to the quality of social relations.

With respect to the need for love and belonging an essential difference was found between students and employees. Students barely referred to the need of love and belonging within their letters whereas for employees it was the most frequently mentioned need. A possible explanation for students barely referring to this need is that they are more focused on the financial aspects when thinking about the basic income. This can explain why students give more importance to the need of safety and security, which in turn is predicted by Maslow's theory.

Also regarding the need for self-esteem, the basic income plays an important role. The UBI can especially contribute to the achievement of personal goals. Many participants wrote about achievements they are proud of and that were made possibly by the UBI. The UBI gives people an appropriate environment to pursue personal challenges which in return enhance people's self-esteem. Students often referred to educational achievements, whereas for employees this seems less important. Kranich's (2013) assumption that people would invest in education was at least for the employees in this study not evident, possibly because they were already satisfied with their level of education. This is in accordance with the fact that most of them already had an academic degree. However, for students, education appeared as an important aspect to enhance their self-esteem. The UBI makes proper education possible by providing financial resources. Therefore, students can focus on their study rather than being stressed about their finances or neglect their studies because they have to work in a side-job. Especially in the Netherlands this is important as the governmental study grant is no longer available (Dienst uitvoering onderwijs, n.d.). The debts due to the academic career and long working-hours apart from their study were addressed within some letters. This can be counteracted with the introduction of a UBI. In this context, one should also refer to the need for rest which was mentioned quite frequently especially by students. According to them, the UBI would increase their experienced rest. Periods of rest and relaxation are important for memory and learning (Kopatz, 2012).

For the fulfillment of self-actualization, the basic income seems only partly useful, namely in enabling people to experience purpose, meaning and inner potential. The UBI gives for example the financial security and freedom to choose a suitable life-style and live out own passions. Furthermore, the UBI takes off the pressure to adopt a way of living which is desired by the society. Participants wrote for example that they feel freer to find their own way in life. Furthermore, it is noteworthy that the experience of purpose, meaning and inner potential is closely linked to well-being. Participants wrote in a highly positive way about these experiences. Some of them even wrote that they are in a state where they feel happy. This link is also shown in a study of Vallerand and Verner-Filion (2013). According to them passion enhances well-being and enables a purposeful life.

The components spontaneity, creativity and acceptance did not play an important role for the participants as they were barely referring to them. One possible explanation might be, that these needs cannot be fulfilled through money and are therefore not in the scope of the basic income. Another reasonable explanation is that it is a side-product of self-actualization and not something people strive purposely for. Support for this assumption is found for creativity. According to Isen, Daubman and Nowicki (1987) does positive affect influences creativity positively. Positive affect describes the subjective experience of positive mood such as interest and joy (Miller, 2011). The experience of purpose, meaning and inner potential was closely linked to such positive moods. It is therefore reasonable to suggest that such experiences have a positive influence on creativity. The participants were instructed to imagine a situation where flourishing takes place. Therefore, they were only capable of imagining a favorable situation with a basic income rather than experience it. Thus, the positive experience is only made in imagination and thus not really experienced. It is therefore logical that participants did not refer to abstract motives such as creativity.

During the analysis of the letters clear differences between students and employees were found. Maslow (1970) already recognized some differences between younger and older people regarding their motivation. He stated that older adults are more concerned with higher motivations where younger adults are more focused on the fulfilling of lower needs. More recent studies replicated this finding (e.g. Reiss & Havercamp, 2005). The results of this study contradict these findings. In future imaginations where a basic income exists there is not an even distribution of motives between younger people (students) and older people (employees). For

example, students are more motivated to fulfill their need of safety and security, whereas employees are more concerned with the need of love and belonging. However, in the case of the UBI there is no difference regarding the highest motivation which is self-actualization. Both students and employees wrote that because of the basic income they feel freer to live their passions and find their purpose in life. It seems that the UBI compensates the difference between the two groups by giving students the freedom for development and guaranteed financial security. For employees, these needs seem in many cases already fulfilled and the UBI is therefore less effective. This is supported by the finding that many students explicitly mentioned that their achievements and gained security was only possible because of the basic income. The employees more often refer to achievements and situations which were less linked to the UBI. It seems that for many participating employees the UBI is perceived as less important. However, this assumption is possibly attributed to the sample. With a net salary of 39504 euro the employee's earning was high compared to the Dutch average of 25883 euro per person and year (OECD, 2015).

These findings have important implications on the debate whether the basic income should be introduced. Against all critiques this study suggests that the basic income has a positive impact on flourishing. It is helpful in fulfilling necessary needs and therefore creates positive circumstances for self-actualization. The finding that the basic income has a positive influence on self-actualization also supports the introduction of a UBI.

The differences between students and employees indicated that especially people who are affected by economic insecurity such as students, benefit most from the basic income. This is in accordance with a study conducted in India by Standing (2011) who is a great supporter of the UBI. He identified a growing group of economic insecure individuals known as precariat. According to him these people are in constant fear of losing their job and often work overeducated in low-paid jobs. As shown in the present study students often belong to this economic insecure group. However, also older people have an increasing risk to become economically insecure. The fact that there is an increasing group of financial insecure people supports the need for a UBI as a "economic stabilization grant" (Standing, 2011, p.175). Affluent people also benefit from the extra finances but to lesser extent. In addition, they profit from the basic income indirectly as they often worry about that themselves or their friends and relatives will fall into the precariat. It should also be in the government's interest to diminish the precariat

because precariatized people tend to be frustrated, potentially angry and vulnerable to identify with strong political orientations, whereas secure people are more tolerant and altruistic (Standing, 2011). In conclusion, the UBI seems to be an appropriate way to support disadvantaged people and reduce the gap between rich and poor citizens (Van Parijs, 1992; Standing, 2011).

Research strength and limitations

Due to the present study being qualitative, several advantages of the basic income are found with respect to the human needs. The letters had a personal character and described the dreams and needs of different individuals. In this context, it is worth mentioning that most participants were emotionally involved and motivated during the workshop. This allowed for the study of effects of the UBI from a humanistic point of view and the personal consequences of a UBI for different individuals. This is a good addition to the available studies from an economic viewpoint. A second strength relates to the chosen sample. Due to two workshops having been conducted, the current study is appropriate to investigate important differences between students and employees. Also, it creates a trustful environment where participants had the possibility to talk about their dreams and desires in a group of people with a similar background. In both workshops, the participants confirmed that they felt comfortable during the workshop and that they enjoyed their participation. This can be also attributed to the instructor's moderation skills.

A limitation of the present study is that most of the employees were above the Dutch average of income. This has possibly effects on their future imaginations with a UBI. In this regard, it is also worth mentioning that most people had also a high level of education. Most participants were either students or already acquired of a HBO or VWO diploma. In addition, only one participant had a MBO degree and no unemployed people took part. A final, maybe most important shortcoming refers to the given instruction. Since participants were asked to imagine a future with a basic income where they flourish they had only the possibility to write about a positive future with a UBI although they could not have been supporters of the UBI. During the debriefing, it became apparent that some of the participants were rather critics. However, this did not become clear by analyzing the letters which may lead to a biased view about the UBI.

Future researchers should consider existing limitations of the present study. Especially, the impact of the basic income on unemployment's capacity of flourishing should be studied in

order to strengthen assumptions about the positive effects of the basic income on unemployment citizens. Kranich (2013) for example supposed that the basic income has a positive influence on their process of self-actualization. In this context, it also would be interesting to conduct the study with a sample of people with a lower social economic status in the Netherlands.

Final remark

To conclude, the UBI is perceived as a useful means to enhance people's potential of self-actualization. According to the participants the UBI would enable them to fulfill their individual needs and desires which are conceptualized in Maslow's motivation theory. Due to that, participants feel promoted to engage in self-actualization. Based on the current findings some aspects of Maslow's pyramid of needs require modification. For instance, the need for comfort and luxury is increasingly seen as a basic need.

Comparing the two groups, a difference in needs between employees and students was found. For students, the most important advantage of the basic income was increased financial security which enhanced self-actualization, whereas for employees the positive effect of the UBI on the need for love and belonging was mentioned most. Overall, the basic income seems to be effective especially for economic disadvantaged people such as students. Given that the group of economic insecure people is growing due to automatization and demographic changes the basic income might be a reasonable step towards economic equality and according to our participants an important step towards self-actualization.

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Appendix

Material Future Now Workshop

Voor studenten:

Beste [*Naam; telkens met persoonlijke aanspreking, eigenhandig geschreven*],

Dankjewel dat je aan ons onderzoek over een toekomstig leven met een basisinkomen meedoet. We willen zorgen dat het voor jou een leuke en leerzame ervaring wordt.

Hierbij ontvang je de volgende documenten, alstublieft invullen en meenemen naar de workshop:

- een toestemmings-formulier,
- een vragenlijst over jouw demografische gegevens,
- een vragenlijst over welbevinden met instructies,
- instructies over het schrijven van een toekomstbrief
- doordrukvel om je toekomstbrief op te schrijven. Je krijgt dus van je toekomstbrief een origineel papier en een afdruk. De afdruk mag je voor jezelf houden, het originele papier neem je mee naar de workshop (zie beneden).

De workshop vindt plaats op vrijdag, 7 april, 16-18 uur, in het Design-Lab. Dat is in gebouw nr. 17 (The Gallery) op de bijgevoegde plattegrond. We zullen je vlak voor 16 uur bij de ingang (zie kruisje) ophalen. Als je het niet kunt vinden dan kun je Helena Igel bellen (+49 1578 2968008).

Jouw gegevens worden anoniem verwerkt. We willen echter wel de vragenlijsten aan je teksten koppelen. Daarom krijg je voor dit onderzoek een ID-nummer: XXXX. [*schrijven wij zelf op alle papieren van het pakketje*] Dit nummer staat op alle papieren in dit pakket. Neem het hele pakket met alle ingevulde documenten (behalve de afdruk van je toekomstbrief) mee naar de workshop. Wij vragen je ook om je ID-nummer op alle papieren te schrijven die je tijdens de workshop gebruikt. [*wij zouden waarschijnlijk ook de doordruk-papieren voor de workshop voorbereiden, met "wat is jouw ID-nr? _____" bovenop*].

Mocht je nog vragen hebben over deze brief of een deel ervan, schroom niet en neem contact op met ons:

Helena Igel / h.igel@student.utwente.nl / +49 1578 2968008
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 Christiane Giebel / c.g.j.giebel@student.utwente.nl / +49 176 93154389
 Lykle Maatje / l.maatje@student.utwente.nl / +31 6 15274702
 Miriam Terbonßen / m.terbonssen@student.utwente.nl / +49 1577 8982987
 Lara Wienke / l.c.wiencke@student.utwente.nl / geen

Voor werknemers, dus hetzelfde met "u":

Geachte [*mevrouw/meneer NAAM; ook eigenhandig opschrijven?*]

Dankuwel dat u aan ons onderzoek wilt deelnemen. We willen zorgen dat het voor u een leuke en leerzame ervaring wordt.

Hierbij ontvangt u de volgende documenten:

- een "informed consent"-formulier, alstublieft tekenen
- een vragenlijst over jouw demografische gegevens, alstublieft invullen

- een vragenlijst over welbevinden met instructies, alstublieft invullen
- instructies over het schrijven van een toekomstbrief
- doordrukvel om uw toekomstbrief op te schrijven. U krijgt dus van uw toekomstbrief een originele papier en een afdruk. De afdruk mag u voor jezelf houden, het originele papier neemt u mee naar de workshop (zie beneden).

De workshop vindt plaats op maandag, 3 april, 19:30 tot 21:30, in het Design-Lab. Dat is in gebouw nr. 17 (The Gallery) op de bijgevoegde plattegrond. We zullen u vlak voor 19:30 uur bij de ingang (zie kruisje) ophalen. Als u het niet kunt vinden dan kunt u Alina Kuhn bellen (+49 176 23818425).

Uw gegevens worden anoniem verwerkt. We willen echter wel de vragenlijsten aan uw teksten koppelen. Daarom krijgt u voor dit onderzoek een ID-nummer: XXXX. [*zélf even opschrijven op alle papieren van het pakketje?*] Deze nummer staat op alle papieren in deze brief. Wilt u alstublieft het hele pakket met alle ingevulde documenten (behalve de afdruk van je toekomstbrief) meenemen naar de workshop? Wij vragen u ook om uw ID-nummer op alle papieren te schrijven die u tijdens de workshop gebruikt. [*wij zouden waarschijnlijk ook de doordruk-papieren voor de workshop voorbereiden, met "wat is jouw ID-nr? _____" bovenop.*]

Mocht u nog vragen hebben over dit pakket of een deel ervan, schroom niet en neemt u contact op met ons:

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 Lara Wienke / l.c.wiencke@student.utwente.nl / geen

Vragenlijst demografische gegevens, voor studenten/MBOers:

Wat is je leeftijd? _____

Wat is je geslacht? _____

Wat is je hoogste afgeronde opleiding? _____

Welke opleiding volg je op dit moment? _____

Vragenlijst demografische gegevens, voor werknemers:

Wat is uw leeftijd? _____

Wat is uw geslacht? _____

Wat is uw hoogste afgeronde opleiding? _____

Als u op dit moment werkzaam bent: Wat voor werk doet u op dit moment? _____

Als u op dit moment niet (meer) werkzaam bent: Wat voor werk deed u als laatste? _____



AANWIJZINGEN VOOR HET SCHRIJVEN VAN DE BRIEF VANUIT DE TOEKOMST

De volgende aanwijzingen zijn tips om je een idee te geven wat de bedoeling is van de brief en waar je aan kunt denken. Voel u vrij om vanuit deze aanwijzingen de brief op je eigen wijze te schrijven. Gebruik volop je verbeeldingskracht: Bedenk dat het gaat om iets wat nog niet gebeurd is en dat het een kans is om je voor te stellen wat zou kunnen gebeuren en mogelijk is.

Waar en wanneer

Stel je voor dat je in een tijdmachine stapt.

Stel je voor waar en wanneer je je bevindt als je in de toekomst bent aangekomen.

Wanneer: Het tijdstip in de toekomst bepaal je zelf, dit kan 1 uur, dag, een week, of jaren later zijn.

Waar: Voorbeelden van de plaats, plek of ruimte in de toekomst waar u aan kunt denken zijn Nederland, een ander land, de ruimte; in je eigen huis of tuin, buitenshuis, in de natuur, in de stad, op het water, in de lucht; een plek met veel andere mensen of juist een lege ruimte; een kleurrijke ruimte? Een lawaaierige ruimte of stille? etc.

Wat?

Stel je voor dat een aantal positieve wensen, veranderingen en dromen in je leven zijn uitgekomen.

Vertel jouw verhaal van een concrete dag, een specifiek moment, of een concrete gebeurtenis waarin duidelijk wordt hoe je een bepaald probleem hebt opgelost of een goede manier heeft gevonden om ermee om te gaan. Probeer details te geven zodat de gebeurtenis, wie je bent en wat je doet in de toekomst zo levendig mogelijk naar voren komt.

Vertel wat achteraf het meest heeft geholpen en hoe je (dan) op het leven van nu terugkijkt.

Aan wie?

Bedenk aan wie je de brief wil schrijven.

- aan je huidige ik (je geeft dan een wijze, vrolijke, of andere positieve boodschap aan jezelf)
- aan iemand anders (bijvoorbeeld je kind of kleinkind, leeftijdgenoten, of de volgende generatie, etc.)

Hou als richtlijn voor de lengte van de brief niet langer dan 400 woorden aan (ongeveer 1 A4)