
11-4-2023

Analysis of the Feasibility of Universal Basic Income in Colombia: A Grounded Theory Study

Johanna S. Acuña Gómez

Fundación Universitaria de Ciencias de la Salud, jsacuna1@fucsalud.edu.co

Wilson G. Jiménez-Barbosa

Universidad de Bogotá Jorge Tadeo Lozano, wilsong.jimenezb@utadeo.edu.co

Juan S. Hernández Monsalve

Fundación Universitaria de Ciencias de la Salud, juans.hernandezm@fucsalud.edu.co

Follow this and additional works at: <https://nsuworks.nova.edu/tqr>



Part of the [Policy Design, Analysis, and Evaluation Commons](#), [Public Policy Commons](#), and the [Social Policy Commons](#)

This Article has supplementary content. View the full record on NSUWorks here:

<https://nsuworks.nova.edu/tqr/vol28/iss11/12>

Recommended APA Citation

Acuña Gómez, J. S., Jiménez-Barbosa, W. G., & Hernández Monsalve, J. S. (2023). Analysis of the Feasibility of Universal Basic Income in Colombia: A Grounded Theory Study. *The Qualitative Report*, 28(11), 3272-3300. <https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2023.6123>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the The Qualitative Report at NSUWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Qualitative Report by an authorized administrator of NSUWorks. For more information, please contact nsuworks@nova.edu.



Analysis of the Feasibility of Universal Basic Income in Colombia: A Grounded Theory Study

Abstract

This paper shows the results of research conducted with the objective of knowing the perceptions of people in Colombia about the possibility of receiving a universal basic income, which does not exist thus far in the country. The research question was: how do the social perceptions of Colombians about receiving a UBI allow them to understand the possibilities of developing a public policy that guarantees it? A qualitative methodology of grounded theory was applied by conducting 37 in-depth interviews with adults of all socioeconomic levels, all educational levels and productive working age. The information obtained was coded. The resultant main categories with which the Grounded Theory was built were mistrust in others, hope for a better society, unconditional support, and implementation scenario. It was concluded that, if there is an intention to implement the UBI in Colombia, there must be policies that contribute to changing the mistrust and fear of citizens to receive support from the State by solidarity and equity so that UBI can be assume as a right that contributes to the construction of justice and social welfare.

Keywords

Colombia, feasibility, grounded theory, social justice, social perceptions, universal basic income

Creative Commons License



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-Share Alike 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/).

Analysis of the Feasibility of Universal Basic Income in Colombia: A Grounded Theory Study

Johanna Sareth Acuña Gómez¹, Wilson Giovanni Jiménez-Barbosa², and
Juan Sebastián Hernández Monsalve¹

¹Fundación Universitaria de Ciencias de la Salud, Colombia

²Universidad de Bogotá Jorge Tadeo Lozano, Colombia

This paper shows the results of research conducted with the objective of knowing the perceptions of people in Colombia about the possibility of receiving a universal basic income, which does not exist thus far in the country. The research question was: how do the social perceptions of Colombians about receiving a UBI allow them to understand the possibilities of developing a public policy that guarantees it? A qualitative methodology of grounded theory was applied by conducting 37 in-depth interviews with adults of all socioeconomic levels, all educational levels and productive working age. The information obtained was coded. The resultant main categories with which the Grounded Theory was built were mistrust in others, hope for a better society, unconditional support, and implementation scenario. It was concluded that, if there is an intention to implement the UBI in Colombia, there must be policies that contribute to changing the mistrust and fear of citizens to receive support from the State by solidarity and equity so that UBI can be assumed as a right that contributes to the construction of justice and social welfare.

Keywords: Colombia, feasibility, grounded theory, social justice, social perceptions, universal basic income

Introduction

Universal Basic Income (UBI) has emerged as a topic of increasing relevance in social policy debates around the world. It is defined as a government-guaranteed income for all members of society, regardless of their socioeconomic status or willingness to work (Van Parijs, 1995).

The UBI seeks to address challenges such as inequality, poverty, and the impact of automation on the labor market and, as a result, expand the freedom of the human being (Perkio, 2019; Van Parijs & Vanderborght, 2017).

From here on, the introductory section is divided into four sections, designed to contextualize Universal Basic Income for the reader; the socioeconomic and political reality of Colombia; social perceptions and their influence on public policies; and the motivations for developing this research along with a brief presentation of researchers who developed this investigation.

Universal Basic Income

From the moral philosophy point of view, various thinkers such as Rawls, Sen, or Nussbaum have argued the need to provide all members of society with a group of goods that allow them to lead a dignified life and enjoy well-being (Rawls, 2006; Sen, 2004). Also, this

purpose is achieved by the UBI in a better way than the current social security programs to which a stigma has been attached, relating them to fraud in their achievement (Melzochová & Specián, 2015; Raventós, 2007).

The idea of providing a UBI has been raised by different thinkers from various political and economic currents, from economic liberalism to utopian socialism; all of them, despite their ideological differences, agree that for a society to promote justice it is necessary to grant all its members a minimum of goods so that they can coexist with dignity (Beveridge, 2008; Marx & Engels 2013; Rousseau, 2013; Smith, 1997). The UBI can also be an instrument of emancipation that allows the human being to achieve autonomy when making decisions related to life; in addition, it offers economic security that is presented as an outline of the so-called distributive justice (Sánchez, 2023).

Such is the case that UBI can function as an instrument to improve distributive justice by having the potential to mitigate income inequality, a currently highly relevant issue in economic and social analysis. According to Stiglitz (2012), the difference in income and wealth between the richest and the poorest has increased significantly in recent decades, generating a greater concentration of wealth in the hands of a few. This growing economic disparity raises concerns about social justice and equal access to opportunity.

Piketty (2014) draws attention to the concentration of wealth as a global phenomenon, which shows a tendency to expand and perpetuate itself if there is no intervention to control it. Hence, wealth inequality can have lasting effects on social mobility and intergenerational equity. Consequently, it is essential to address these disparities and to dig for redistributive policies of income and wealth that promote a more equal and more sustainable society (Atkinson, 2015).

Conversely, the advent of the fourth industrial revolution has given strength to the idea of delivering a UBI. The fourth industrial revolution is a global trend emerging as a powerful wave bringing automation of manual and cognitive labor required to produce goods and services, driven by the development and use of autonomous robots and human-computer interfaces. This wave of automation is expected to cause the displacement of many current jobs, which could lead to increased unemployment rates, especially among the middle-class segments of society. Ultimately, this could lead to a loss of purchasing power, a decrease in consumption, and a decrease in the quality of life in general (Bria, 2017).

Consequently, there is a growing need to consider how to restore purchasing power, find employment opportunities for those who will no longer be employed, and improve social equity. In this sense, today, the UBI becomes, together with the creation of jobs in the care sector, creativity, social engineering and others unknown today, one of the main options with the potential to restore social justice, dignity, well-being and freedom, with which it would be on the verge of starting a new historical stage in which the human being is freed from work as his only source of income (Keynes, 1930; Bregman, 2017).

In short, the UBI represents a radical proposal for change that has the potential to invigorate a society by strengthening, maintaining, or restoring the purchasing power and consumption of individuals, while increasing freedom for social activities related to care and the arts, among others. In addition, it would improve the distribution of wealth and social equity.

Colombia: A Contextual Approximation

Colombia is a highly unequal society, with different levels of developments among its regions, high rates of poverty, unemployment, and marginalization as a result, among other outcomes, derived from its endemic violence and the power structure that concentrates decisions in a minority who holds the political and economic power in favor of their particular

interests provoking the concentration of wealth in a few hands (Caballero, 2018; Pizarro & Moncayo, 2015; Robinson, 2016).

Because of that, the country has experienced significant economic inequality, that becomes notorious when reviewing the results of the GINI index. Hereby, when analyzing the data from the last 31 years in context, it can be seen in a first stage that the GINI had a gradual increase from 1991 until it reached a zenith in 2002 (Departamento Nacional de Planeación & Departamento Nacional de Estadística, 2012).

This period coincides with the implementation of neoliberal policies such as opening of imports; fiscal balances; free currency exchange; privatization of social sectors such as education, health, and public services; and reduction of state participation. Policies promoted by the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and the U.S. Federal Reserve System through the Washington Consensus and which, in the Colombian case, coincided with two important events in its history such as the peace agreements with the guerrillas of the M-19, the EPL and Quintín Lame in 1990, and the promulgation of the Political Constitution of 1991, currently in force (Bushnell, 2014).

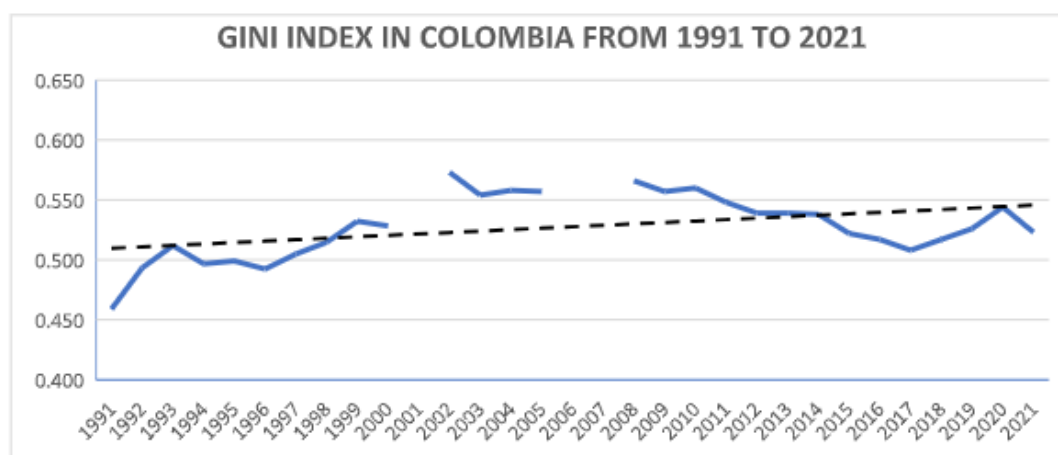
In other ways, in the period between 2002 and 2010, it is observed that the GINI does not decrease. This period corresponds to the demobilization of the paramilitary groups (many of these groups mutated and continued inserted in the vast complex of the criminal economy) and the intensification of the armed conflict between the guerrilla groups and the Colombian government led by Álvaro Uribe Vélez, with the support of the United States government through the “Plan Colombia” (Pizarro & Moncayo, 2015).

From there, the result of the GINI index presented a slight decrease until reaching 0.508 in 2017, a period that corresponds to the process of negotiation and signing of the peace agreement between the government of President Juan Manuel Santos and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia – FARC (Gobierno Nacional de Colombia & FARC, 2016).

However, the GINI increased again as of 2018, reaching a high point in 2020 due to the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2021, a decrease was observed again, standing at 0.523, perhaps as a result of the economic recovery when the isolation measures taken during the pandemic were lifted. But, despite these changes, the trend line shows that inequality has not been able to reverse the historical upward trend (see Figure 1; Departamento Nacional de Planeación & Departamento Administrativo Nacional de Estadística, 2012).

Figure 1

Behavior of the GINI index in Columbia between 1991 and 2021

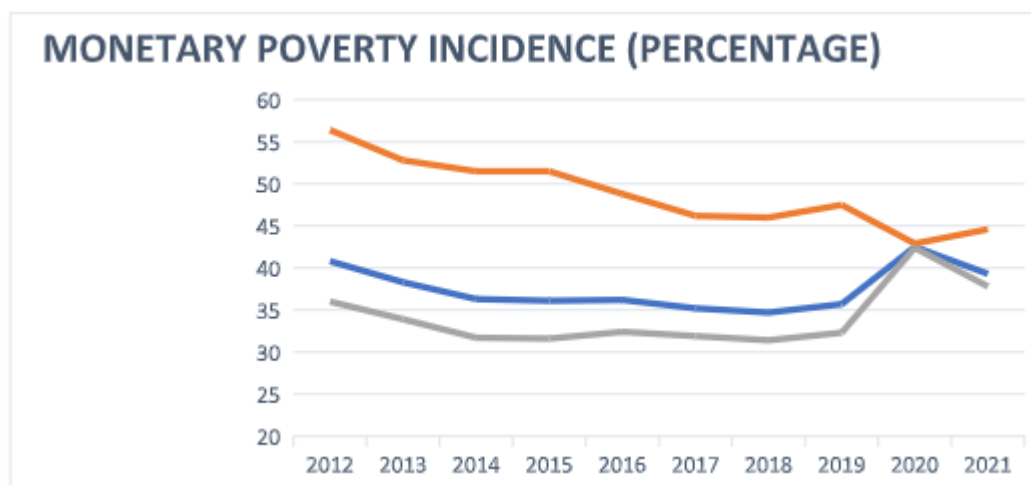


Note. Own elaboration based on "Pobreza monetaria año 2021" Departamento Nacional Administrativo de Estadísticas, 2022; "Pobreza monetaria y multidimensional en Colombia 2012" Departamento Nacional Administrativo de Estadísticas, 2013.

Adding up, concerning monetary poverty at a national level, since 2012, this had been declining, a trend caused by the isolation measures derived from the COVID-19 pandemic, reflected in an increase of 4.8 percentage points in 2020 compared to 2019 (see Figure 2; Departamento Nacional de Planeación & Departamento Administrativo Nacional de Estadística, 2012).

Figure 2

Percentage behavior of the Incidence of Monetary Poverty between 2012 and 2021



Note. Own elaboration based on "Pobreza monetaria año 2021" Departamento Nacional Administrativo de Estadísticas, 2022; "Pobreza monetaria y multidimensional en Colombia 2012" Departamento Nacional Administrativo de Estadísticas, 2013.

On the contrary, Figure 2 shows the gap in the incidence of monetary poverty between country seats with respect to populated centers and rural areas with a dispersed population, which demonstrates the urban-rural problem in force in the country.

This gap that had been narrowing and was almost closed in 2020 during the pandemic, perhaps as a result of the Colombian government implementing a monthly monetary transfer called Solidary Income (*Ingreso Solidario* in its original language; Ministerio de Hacienda y Crédito Público, 2020) of 190,000 Colombian pesos (around 45 US dollars with 2023 currency) to support approximately four million of the poorest households (around 20 million people, representing 40% of the country's population). However, the following year it was expanded again, although to a lesser degree than that existing prior to the pandemic.

The beneficiaries of the Solidary Income are households in situations of poverty, extreme poverty, and socioeconomic vulnerability, prioritizing the population with disabilities. The amount of the transfer depends on the conformation of the household, the area in which it lives and the age group of the beneficiaries. As of June, 2023, two million families are benefiting from this program, representing 94% of the target population to be covered.

In summary, implementing in Colombia a public policy aimed at granting a UBI could contribute to the reduction of poverty and inequality (Rendón, 2010). The aforesaid theory is starting to be accepted in the country with the creation another program promoted by the current government, called Civic Income (*Renta Ciudadana* in its original language) with the purposes of contributing to poverty overcoming, social mobility promotion and strengthening of popular and community economy.

Social Perceptions and their Influence on Public Policies

The way people define their moral judgments affects the way they perceive reality. According to Haidt (2012), moral judgments are formed intuitively and emotionally, based on values and previous experiences, to be later justified by means of logical reasoning. This implies that social perceptions derive from the moral judgments that are made about reality and are reflected in the way in which opinions are expressed on a particular topic.

Moreover, the construction of social perceptions is strongly influenced by the historicity and the context experienced in the close community of everyone. In this regard, Berger and Luckmann (1991) affirmed that social reality is constructed and maintained through the processes of human interaction and the internalization of socially shared interpretations.

Similarly, conceptions about the State also affect the way in which reality is perceived. Rawls (1971) pointed out that the conceptions of justice are influenced by the idea that one has about the role of the State in the distribution of resources and opportunities. These conceptions may vary according to political perspectives and beliefs about the responsibility of the State in promoting equity and social justice.

It is then that the way in which each human being perceives and confronts reality is influenced by moral judgments built based on his historicity and the context in which he has lived as part of a community and a State. These factors interact and intertwine in the construction of social perception.

For these reasons, before formulating and implementing a public policy such as UBI, it is advisable to investigate the social perceptions that citizens have about what its possible development means for them. Despite how important it is for the public policy formulation process to recognize the perception of potential beneficiaries, few international studies have addressed this issue (Standelmann & Dermont, 2019).

Thus, to fill this knowledge gap, the implementation of UBI in Colombia requires a prior understanding of the social perceptions of its inhabitants configured by historical and social processes, in order to formulate and develop a UBI policy based on the particularities of a people as diverse and complex as Colombians.

For this reason, the following research question was posed: how do the social perceptions of Colombians about receiving UBI influence the possibility of developing a public policy that guarantees it?

Derived from the research question, the objective of this investigation was defined to understand the way in which the social perceptions of Colombians about receiving a UBI influence the possibility of developing a public policy that guarantees it. It is expected that the research will serve public policy makers to decide if the implementation of the UBI has social, cultural, and political acceptance by its potential beneficiaries in a very specific historical and contextual framework such as Colombian.

Context of the Study

This study was motivated by the common interest of researchers in reflecting on whether it is possible to implement a UBI in Colombia as a strategy to overcome poverty and inequality, notorious social problems in their country of origin, Colombia. It is awaited that the results presented here serve as a reference to continue studying similar topics and it is expected that these results are also considered by those responsible for formulating national and local public policies when designing, implementing, and evaluating programs such as the Citizen Income, currently under development.

Johanna Acuña-Gómez is a professor and researcher currently working for Fundación Universitaria de Ciencias de la Salud (FUCS) in Bogota and has a PhD in management

modeling and public policies; Wilson Giovanni Jiménez-Barbosa is a tenured professor for Jorge Tadeo Lozano University in Bogota and researcher with a PhD in social sciences, childhood, and youth; Sebastián Hernández is a professor and researcher with a master's degree in health policies and management working for FUCS in Bogota at present. All authors have had undergraduate formation in careers related to healthcare.

Methods

This research was developed using a qualitative methodology - Grounded Theory (GT) design. This design of inductive approach was proposed by Glaser and Strauss (1967) who point out that its application allows the discovery of emerging patterns and relationships in the data, which leads to more authentic and more rooted to reality theories. The purpose of the GT is basically to formulate a substantive theory based on the categories that emerge from the analysis of the qualitative data collected throughout the investigation, leading to the explanation and understanding of the actions carried out by individuals and/or groups when they face problems or situations in a given context (Glaser & Strauss, 2006; Strauss & Corbin, 2002). The use of GT is recommended when the research topic has not been previously studied or the scientific production around it is scarce; likewise, when a new point of view regarding a well-known research area is wanted (Natera-Gutiérrez & Guerrero-Castañeda, 2018; Santos & Cunha, 2018). All of the above were reasons that led to the selection of this type of design as the most appropriate to accomplish the research objectives.

The theoretical sampling was carried through in a flexible way and was adjusted as the investigation progressed. Participants were selected based on their ability to contribute substantive knowledge, relevant experiences, and diverse perspectives on the phenomenon under study (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The main objective of theoretical sampling is to capture the acquisition and diversity of the phenomenon that is being addressed. The selected participants must offer different perspectives, experiences and contexts that are relevant to the construction of theory. As Charmaz and Belgrave (2012) pointed out, theoretical sampling allows a deep understanding of the phenomenon by selecting participants who represent a wide range of characteristics and situations related to the research topic. The inclusion criteria were adults (legal age 18 in the case of Colombia), within the working age range, all sexes, all educational levels, residents of urban or rural areas, all socioeconomic levels. The number of applied interviews was necessary to achieve data saturation and sufficient to guarantee explanatory abundance and enough theoretical relationships between categories. It should be noted that a basic principle of qualitative research is that the appropriate sample size depends on factors specific to the study in question (Smith et al 2008); in this case, the theoretical saturation of the categories was observed when the 37 interviews were completed.

It is important to state that the research project which results are exposed in this paper was submitted to the Institutional Ethics Committee of Jorge Tadeo Lozano University, who approved it according to the minute number one of 02/01/2019 confirming that “this project complies with ethical, scientific and technical norms.”

The data collection instrument used was the in-depth interview, which was applied to 37 people who met all the inclusion criteria previously exposed. A lot of them, at the beginning of each interview and after reading the informed consent, verbally authorized the use of the information collected. The interviews were conducted in the cities of Riohacha, Santa Marta, Valledupar, Bogotá, Pasto, and Tumaco. These cities are in different regions of the Colombian territory, each one with its own geographical, sociodemographic, and cultural characteristics, with the purpose of obtaining diversity in the perspectives and perceptions about the phenomenon under study.

The interviews were applied in three cycles. The first included 22 people, the second eight, and the third seven. Each interview was identified by a code that begins with the letter "I" (key for interviewee) followed by a sequential number that was assigned to it, as can be seen in the verbatims that support the GT. To develop each of the interviews, an in-depth questionnaire was used, and it was modified for each phase.

During interviews, people were asked for their perceptions about matters such as work and the meaning of it in their lives; the possibility of themselves and others receiving the UBI, what themselves and the rest of Colombian people would spend this income on; the social (in)justice surrounding the UBI implementation in Colombia; and what would be the most appropriate way to distribute this income among Colombian society. It should be emphasized that inquiring people in Colombia about UBI led to a discussion concerning the essence of what it means to be Colombian, which implied listening to people's dreams, hopes, fears, and resentments. Interviews were audio-recorded, and their transcription was made by reproducing them while they were being typed on a computer in Microsoft Word. This task was entirely developed by the researchers to guarantee the restricted circulation of the information provided by the participants, as well as to ensure its use with purely academic purposes.

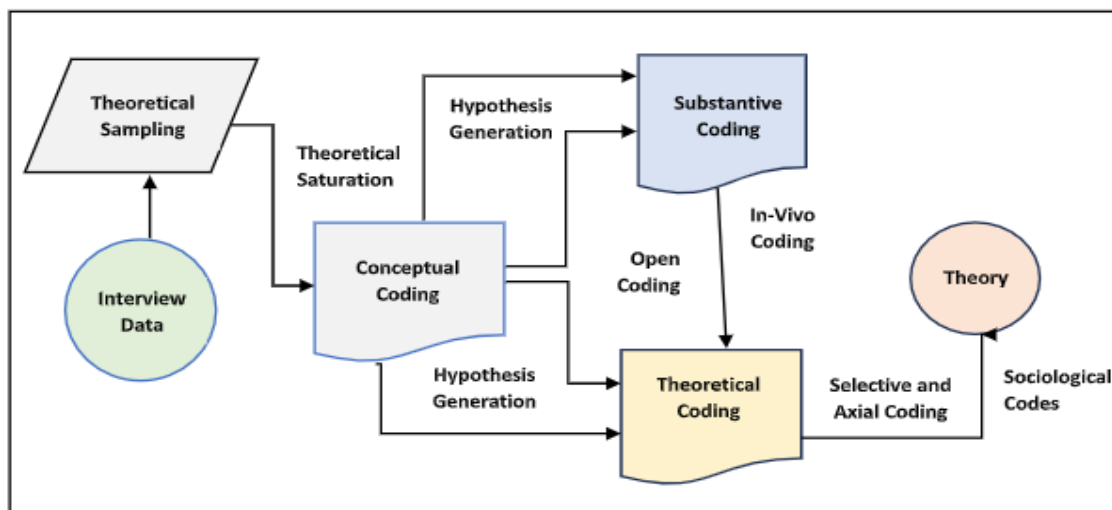
For the analysis of the information, GT seeks the fragmentation of the data collected in the interview through the generation of conceptual codes that work as bridges between data and theory. Basically, there are two types of conceptual codes: substantive and theoretical. The first ones conceptualize the empirical substance of the study area, while the second ones conceptualize how substantive codes can be related to one another as hypotheses to be integrated into a theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The extraction of these two types of conceptual codes is done through three fundamental steps:

- *Description.* From here, substantive codes emerge that are transformed into open categories that, although they refer directly to the data, begin to generate the first contrasts that researchers managed to do amongst theory and their knowledge, experience and historicity.
- *Conceptual ordering.* Here, theoretical codes that will give structure and comprehension to the theory emerge.
- *Sequential coding process.* This step has two phases: axial and selective.

Said codifications are theoretical abstractions that researchers make, which they gradually modify, refine, and gather to establish comprehensive discursive axes on the analyzed phenomenon. The final step is theorizing, in which well-developed concepts and/or categories are grouped through relationship sentences to generate a conceptual model that explains or predicts phenomena. In this way, the theory emerges because of the imbrication of the theoretical codes that arose during the analytical process and that allow one to give structure and understanding to the phenomenon that motivated this investigative process.

The coding process, which led to the identification of concepts, categories, and finally, the postulation of the grounded theory, was developed manually and consolidated in tables using the Excel program. The graphic description of the methodological process is shown in the following model:

Figure 3
Grounded theory model



Note. Own elaboration of the authors based on Strauss and Corbin, 2002; Glaser and Strauss, 1975.

Subsequently, the open categories which emerged in each cycle were grouped into a smaller group of axial categories according to the interrelationships between them and then the final analysis of the axial categories was carried out to derive the selective categories. That constituted the guiding axis that led to the postulation of the grounded theory, resulting from the investigative exercise. The summary of the category construction process is detailed in the following table:

Table 1
Categories and phases of the coding process

Selective Categories	Axial Categories	Open Categories
Mistrust on others	Mistrust on others	Fear
		Mistrust on others
		Conformism
	Absent State	Worse society
		Absent State
		Better to invest in other things
Hope for a better society	Better society	Distributive justice
		Better society
		Faith in society
		Democracy strengthening
	New citizenry	Rights, equality, and equity
		Autonomy and heteronomy
	Decent life	Aspirational income
		Usage
		Economic freedom

		Dignity, survival
Unconditional support	Leisure or work	Leisure or work
		Work, no money as a gift, working for passion
	Compensation or conditioning	Compensation or conditioning
Implementation scenario	Political approach	Political approach
		To prepare society
		Funding
	Political corruption	Political corruption
	To improve families' income	Complementary income to work income
		Additional support for what already exists
Other effects	Other effects	

Source: Own elaboration of the authors.

Results

This section presents the results extracted from the information provided by the interviewees. The results in this section are organized into subheadings, each of which corresponds to the name given to each selective category. These results correspond to the Grounded Theory built from the processing of the information collected throughout the present investigation.

Mistrust in Others

A group of six open categories (“fear,” “distrust in the other,” “conformism,” “worse society,” “absent state,” and “better to invest in other things”) was clustered into two axial categories (“mistrust in others” and “absent State”) from which the selective category, “mistrust in others,” resulted.

In this category are condensed perceptions that have to do with the social and moral value of work, the opportunities that one has or does not have to be employed, the effects that would come with the implementation of the UBI on the need and willingness of people to work, the possibility for employers to get employees, the possibility of providing economic support to others and to oneself, the failures that the State has had as a guarantor of rights and support to its citizens, and the distrust that Colombians have about the capacity of the State and of the citizenry on the attribution and use of the UBI. All these perceptions are narrated in detail below.

The first perception that arises is related to the importance of work within the values of Colombian society. What does not come from work is considered immoral and produces distrust; therefore, those who obtain an income from means different to work are socially censored. On the other hand, work is considered an obligation, a necessity to be able to survive, fulfill dreams, provide for the family, develop as a human being, and contribute to society. Those who do not work are seen as pariahs, as someone incapable of having a decent life; ergo,

the idea of losing their job generates fear. Hence, categorical statements such as the following are expressed:

... people must be taught to work from birth, they must not be given anything, they must be taught to value work, they must be taught to value what is achieved with sweat of the brow, they must not be taught that things can be done give (I18).

But these judgements related to working and linked to what is given to others suggest some unconformity with respect to the opportunities that others have since childhood, even more in a country with such a notorious unequal distribution of wealth and opportunities like Colombia; so, maybe as a way of keeping calm, they consider it is impossible that having a childhood and youth with no haste leads to “being successful in life.”

...just look at what happens with daddy’s boys and girls, like they are called, they have everything they want and most of them are not educated in values, they learn to appreciate money instead, they think they are better people because they have everything, but at the end of the day they don’t achieve anything in life because they continue wanting everything the easy way (I18).

Probably those who have built their own wealth by working hard and with effort are the ones who oppose the most to the possibility that others can escape poverty by getting a UBI, by accepting only as valid obtaining of wealth through one’s own effort; that’s why they see solidarity as a threat to their status-quo and to the social position they have reached.

...for people who are used to work, I think this system is more disadvantageous because people will lighten up (I17).

Continuing with the matter of work, it results interesting the relationship interviewees establish between UBI as source of relief when it comes to economy, but also a possible disincentive to work.

... many people would not work, depending on the amount of money provided with UBI, but would dedicate themselves to just wait for this money to come... and in that case State would become their partner in crime... (I36).

This serenity regarding economy is perceived as concerning for those who own companies because they think it would be difficult for them to find employees.

... If you have a small company, or big or whatever, no one would like to work for you because everybody would be relying on the income, they would be only waiting for the subsidy to be granted (I8).

Maybe the fear expressed by employers shows an actual improvement that UBI would represent for potential employees’ salary, preventing them from accepting jobs that do not grant appropriate working conditions and economic dignity. In other words, the logic of the labor market would be reversed by creating empowered employees who would demand jobs that really improve their well-being. Especially in intermediate cities, UBI is perceived as a threat to the possibility of hiring domestic workers, often for wages below the established legal minimum.

...a domestic employee, who had three children and was pregnant, used to work for us, but she decided to quit because she was not worried as she would get an income for each one of her children. She could count on that income and perceived her salary only as extra money; it was not her priority, the subsidy was (I29).

As can be seen, the disincentive that the UBI would generate on work is associated with two variables: the amount to be received and unconditionality. Additionally, it is thought that the UBI would turn those who receive it into dependents and burdens for the State. In addition, the absence of permanent work leads to statements such as that not having a job makes citizens hostile to the State and their fellow citizens.

...the human being who does not work is on the outside, feels as an outsider of State and society...therefore... perhaps it threatens State and society, in such a way that work apart from being the fundamental tool for subsistence daily life of human beings, I think it is more important in the sense that it includes human beings in their community, neighborhood, state and national environments (I24).

Another perception emerged from suggesting UBI grant is the duality between what one would do with it and what the others would do; in essence, it showed people mistrust in others. Those who were interviewed frequently affirmed that they would invest it wisely if they received it while the others would do it deficiently; some of them even expressed that the others did not really need it.

... once some people got the money they would spend it on alcohol, drugs, and that kind of things, but talking specifically about my family, I think it would represent a very important support, because we are hard workers and extra incomes are always gratifying (I20).

This difference in the possible use of UBI, for some interviewees, is related to the recipient's sex. According to them, if a woman got the income, it would have a positive impact on the youngest and most vulnerable members of the family, children.

... people like me always think about family, but others only think about themselves as they are extremely individualist and only think about their own benefits and their ego. Women are used to thinking about our children and our family (I28).

But beyond the perspective of how the people who would get UBI could use it, there is an underlying moral judgement related to the others' freedom and to the possibility of each person to decide what to do or not with an income that would be claimed as civil right. This moral judgment creates perceptions according to which the validity of the UBI depends exclusively on the "virtuous" use of the resource, understood as the return that could be obtained by investing it in education or economic projects.

...the only disadvantage that I see is that people are not committed to making that money produce, if you understand what I mean...umm...they are just lying there on the sofa waiting for the money every month and not worrying about learning something that they can improve their situation in the future (I34).

That explains the perception some people have in which instead handing a UBI to people, the State should invest in solving other unsatisfied needs citizens have, which discloses that State has had shortcomings when ensuring well-being to Colombians, through social protection networks and the guarantee of their fundamental rights.

...I think what really matters is that our country generates employment, excellent education, to invests in supporting sports, culture, technology so their citizens can be productive, and then Colombia would become competitive worldwide, that's what development does for all citizens in a country (I22).

These judgements create a speech which is opposed to UBI principles, when it is assumed that this kind of initiatives can lead to a social step back by producing what has been called mind castration; that means, reducing creativity in which social support networks have been based and the economy of survival, imperative throughout the Colombian history.

... I think that UBI would be a setback of society progress because the more the State and its institutions hand subsidies, so to speak, the lazier people become, they won't care about having better social conditions. This could also cause crime increase and all the problems that come with it (I17).

This ethical and moral evaluation becomes a demand for control and surveillance, so that if the use of the UBI is considered wrong, the annulment of this right is given as punishment. However, this perspective of surveillance and control clashes with the vision that citizens have of an absent State; of a State that has been incapable of guaranteeing the rights and well-being of its citizens; of a State that generates injustices in which the citizen does not feel represented.

...the history of the Colombian State is a history of... an absent state, a state that does not present a phantom state, a state bled dry by corruption, a state that, although legally it is a leviathan, in practical terms of guaranteeing the minimum vital and the rights fundamentals of citizenship has been meager, a state that... has been centralized in Bogotá and from there emanates guidelines, norms, laws, towards the regions (I24).

Additionally, it is observed that there is a negative perception about the operation of the conditional transfer program “Más Familias en Acción” (in English, “More Families in Action,” hereinafter MFA) through which poor families, targeted by the national government, according to their level of poverty, receive money if their children attend school and go to health programs. MFA has been associated with an increase in the national birth rate, the use of resources for purposes other than the well-being of children, and a reluctance to seek work on the part of the beneficiary heads of households (mostly women heads of households) – problems that, by extension, are assigned to the possible implementation of the UBI, which accounts for the strong confusion existing between a subsidy policy and the citizen rights approach on which the UBI is based.

...the mothers who are households' head are demanding money, in fact, it is said that many of them get used to having several children to claim more money, I'm talking 'bout the mothers of MFA. It would be ideal, in principle, to give it to the helpless elderly, it would be ideal to give it to those people, but from

children to a person, perhaps like you or me who could have everything, for us to be sponsored like that by State, I think it seems shameless (I18).

As it is fathomed, communities think is unfair to get economic benefits only for being citizens of a nation; that means they do not agree with the conditionality principle of UBI because they understand it as a policy with negative outcomes that would eventually lead to a bigger social crisis, a statement no less than ironic when it is considered that Colombia has great rates of poverty and inequality.

... I wonder to what extent or why are they giving it to you... everything... nowadays in Colombia everything works like that, if they give you something, there must be a consequence, nobody gives things just like that (I1).

As corollary of this section, mistrust in others is so strong in Colombian society that an interviewed person, when asked about UBI, categorically replied: "... It would turn people into mediocre" (I31). Therefore, thinking about UBI in Colombia must include strategies and actions aimed to surpass the main sources of distrust, a very difficult task that might need the previous construction of a new relationship between State and citizens.

Hope for a Better Society

A group of ten open categories (distributive justice; better society; faith in society; strengthening of democracy; law; equality and equity; autonomy, heteronomy; aspirational income; use; economic freedom; dignity; survival) was grouped into three axial categories (better society, new citizenry, and decent life) from which the selective category, "hope for a better society" was formed.

Here some perceptions became evident during the interviews. These have to do with the freedom that it would mean to be able to invest UBI money and time in matters other than work and the simple subsistence, solving economic needs more easily, approaching a better quality of life, and the social progress that comes with it all.

It cannot be set aside that once the concerns about what the other does with UBI and some contextual factors are overcome, most of the people recognize this income would be beneficial in the sense that the possibility of having a better life would come with it. This is how a new speech appears, contrary to the one built out of mistrust and fear. Said speech includes hopes for a life with less privations as well as the recognition of others' suffering, especially of those who have no food, those who face the hardest poverty on the daily basis.

... if government helps people, that'd be fine, excellent indeed, so we wouldn't be in need. One could have something to offer to the family, to the children, there's plenty of people that don't even have breakfast, have lunch, they're starving, so if government gives support, there wouldn't be as many children living in poverty (I2).

That is to say that UBI allows people to improve their life quality, as it was pointed by one of the interviewees: "...one of the advantages is to have a better life quality" (I11). And not only understood from an individual and subjective perspective but also from collective perspective, from the construction of a democratic and participative society, one based on empathy and respect for others, for nature and life itself.

... there would be a citizenry more committed with State, more committed with their social, political, democratic environments, more educated precisely because anguishes from daily struggle with getting by and informal work have created “autistic citizens” that get up every morning just to look for the daily bread, but they have forgotten about participating in social, political, and democratic surrounding (I24).

In respect to informal work on the streets, interviewed people consider that UBI has the potential for improving life conditions of those who struggle to subsist daily, because they would have an income to make their contribution to social security system and they would not have the need of be working under unfair conditions.

...I consider that if... if you already have that income support... after that one can put it to good use... helping to avoid having that informal job in which... one has no right to anything, neither payment for health, nor education, if not already having that income, you start to... you start to take things very seriously and try to invest the money that the state gives you (I32).

In respect of robbery and crime invading the streets day-to-day, interviewees believe that UBI would decline these phenomena by generating a new subsistence way that would dispel the need of committing crime for surviving. Respecting to the people who must join criminal organizations as a way to get at least one income that would help them to meet their needs, it is expected that UBI would disincentive people when participating in illicit businesses such as organized crime, drug trafficking, and contraband, among other things.

... Universal basic income might impact in... huh... in the deactivation of delinquency phenomena, especially those ones that are linked to population subsistence, so this income is a social protection net... Isn't it? Still more for the most vulnerable population sectors (I37).

Moreover, said benefits are not only expected within the neighborhoods and communities, but also at the family level, giving some sense of peace to those working mothers worrying because they must leave their children under the care of third parties, because UBI could fund that kind of protection that currently, because of State failure, is absent.

... many of my coworkers, who live here in Bogota, in a neighborhood called El Perdomo, they use Transmilenio as their means of transport to come here, they hardly see their children because they do live very far from here, this income would help them... ehh... to... at least... to pay for the nursery where they leave their children while working, to have a base for that expense (I27).

Likewise, it is considered that UBI could be spent in financing education and that way improving competitiveness and the country's economy with a positive impact on families' lives.

... I think that it would have a positive impact on many people that have no access to education... there would be less laziness, less crime, people would have something to dedicate their time to... with no excuse (I36).

Nevertheless, to achieve those benefits, citizens should understand UBI as the warranty of an unconditional and inalienable right for everyone to access equally because the mere fact of being citizens. Thus, the UBI is perceived as a potential path towards the gradual elimination of inequalities that are entrenched in Colombian society, perhaps that is the greatest achievement that would be expected when implementing it.

... the concept of basic income, in my opinion, makes sense... and... and its importance and usefulness... corresponds to the fact that it can be an instrument for... construction... to reduce inequalities and guarantee access to basic services that today the population does not have or that it has, let's say, in a very precarious way (I37).

Also, it should be clarified that UBI is not a subsidy, thus its impact on social dynamics and economy are different since there is no obligation of demonstrating or proving the compliance of any conditioning, what confirms even more its underlying principle of equality.

... it is not a subsidy, it's not tied to any condition, but it's an income for the mere fact of being a citizen, so I consider that it should be given equally to all citizens of Colombia (I13).

In consequence, not being a subsidy, it has the potential of ending the dependency established between State and beneficiary; in other words, it would not have the risk of leading to clientelism, stigmatization, standstill, and bureaucracy, that in Colombia, are typically associated with conditional cash transfer policies.

... the chain of dependency doesn't happen because the subsidy exists, but because of the absence of a universal social policy or a group of them meant to grant the attention of social right with dignity and the guarantee of person's liberation regarding the state of need, especially those who are subdued to that dependency on the subsidy (I37).

However, the elimination of inequalities must involve the construction of equality, and for that matter, it is necessary the recognition of the deep differences concerning riches possession that generate questions among the interviewed people. In addition, to think about stipulating differences in the amount of UBI according to the social level of beneficiaries and/or denying universality and unconditionality, some think it would constitute a source of disagreement and, therefore, rejection by citizens.

... because if the rich people get the subsidy, they will have the possibility of being richer and the poor would then feel inconformity, they could think: "Huh! Since they have a higher stratum than us, they are going to receive more, and we are going to receive less because of our condition." So, to unify, a state of equality it should be the same for everyone (I19).

So, the discussion takes places about the fairness on giving a UBI to people with high incomes because that decision would need the creation a tributary system (or the modification of the existent) to compensate the distributive injustice originated by giving the wealthy people more money than they already have.

... in the debate on the last tax reform, we raised a discussion about the need to tax dividends and profits, that was not possible, so, what the Congress of the Republic did was approve a value added tax increase of 19%. That... this... is actually regressive, and the same occurs with other types of fiscal instruments, we have a delay, for example, in relation to the rural cadaster that has a direct impact on territorial finances in relation to the payment of the property tax (I37).

Therefore, the implementation of a policy towards giving a UBI must be accompanied, invariably, with reforms at the fiscal and social levels to improve the riches distribution, allowing UBI to accomplish its objectives and enhancing democratic participation of citizens.

... I think that UBI would guarantee citizens more involved in democracy and politics, citizens more committed to building the future through the path of education and health (I24).

Speaking of direct impacts in interviewees' daily basis, UBI is perceived as a way of preventing people from facing lives with work overload and the need of having more than one job and the implications of that over life quality, wellness, and health of those who are forced to have that overdone life rhythm.

... if I decide to have a second shift once I'm done here, that would be wear myself out, to feel exhausted from this job and stepping into another... I mean... sometimes that's what I do, I finish my shift here at 2 in the afternoon and even when I feel tired, I go to another place to continue working because I know that money is helpful for my family expenditures, but it's hard to be drained, sometimes sick of working and also be hurried to get to another place just so you can earn some extra money that will help a lot at home (I28)

Consequently, the UBI would reduce the risk of frustration that arises when hopes, such as studying or even covering essentials, such as having to eat, are cut short by the impossibility of being able to pay for them.

... that would be a great help... look... at least my daughter graduated with honors from high school, and I have had to shed tears because my daughter entered SENA (the National Service of Learning) to study and if she had enough for the buses, she didn't have enough for food... that is... it was hard, so hard... My girl left SENA to go out and take care of her brother and then she went back to SENA... And it was hard... pretty hard... to see that my daughter, an excellent student in everything with good honors and everything not being able to help her. That hurts (I28).

Freedom is another aspect perceived as relevant among the interviewed people, they think getting the support of UBI would allow them to enjoy more activities related to family life, entertainment, undertaking, personal dreams, without that implying to spend the money they need for basic needs. They even spoke out about investing UBI money for altruism and giving help to those in most need.

... I would take advantage of the time with my family, I could create social... umm... social spaces, also support other communities, because I wouldn't be struggling to get the daily bread (I26).

As a result, UBI might turn into a source of emotional balance by allowing full enjoyment of a good living, a life with dignity, it being understood as a life wherewith is possible to enjoy family, entertainment, leisure, as well as work so individuals have an impulse of reattributing society and State for making it possible.

... it would motivate people to outdo themselves. Because... umm... because they already have something secured... at least they would have their basic needs covered... and that would encourage them more than anything to be reciprocal with the... with the government, with the country to... to... how to pay a little in work... what... what the government is doing at the moment by giving you that basic income (I27).

In summary, UBI is perceived as a potential way to transform the structures of society, State and individuals, what would imply a huge challenge, being necessary the creation of complementary policies and State accompaniment to the citizens in order to help them developing their potentials, as stated by one of the interviewees: "... a basic income policy must be aimed not only at attending entitlements but also at generating capacities" (I37).

At this point it is important to indicate the underlying opposition between the perceptions discussed in this category and those exposed in the previous category. Although the narrative of the interviewees expresses a manifest mistrust in others and the State itself, on the other hand, there is a latent hope around social progress and the possibility of having a better society.

Unconditional Support

From three open categories ("leisure or work;" "work, not money given, work as a passion;" "compensation and conditioning"), two axial categories came out ("leisure or work" and "consideration or conditioning"), from which the selective category, "unconditional support" resulted.

From this category, perceptions related to the fundamental precept of the UBI, "unconditional support," emerged. The duality that implies for potential beneficiaries whether to have requirements to condition people regarding the use of money from the UBI; the presumed dependency that could arise from not having any limit in terms of access to this money; the implications for the equity and social justice that comes with attributing an amount to everyone without exception in an indisputably unequal society like Colombia's.

The unconditionality inherent to the UBI generates broad moral judgments expressed in perceptions ranging from full acceptance: "... if it is supposed to be something at a general level for the entire population, then I think it should not have conditions as such" (I1); up to the perspective of a relationship of rights and duties that must be assumed to receive it: "... this income must also have not only a right but also some duties" (I26). Between these two landmarks, a narrative of the interviewees is being built that leans more towards the requirement of conditions to be met for receiving a UBI.

... I believe that the income should be linked to deeper criteria and not just give it for the sake of giving because it is good that the profits are shared and that one can have a benefit, if it is conditioned (I29).

For the most part, this conditional nature is related to the need of remunerating State for the action of granting a UBI; said request for reciprocity must go even further, it must be linked to

the efficient usage of the granted money; that is, the investment of fiscal resources aimed to build a more equal and fairer society:

... I think that beneficiaries' retribution should be part of the package of components that need to be included within the basic income policy, so it won't become an inefficient expense of public resources, but it'll become an efficient instrument for social equity construction..." (I37).

The conditionings that beneficiaries would need to compel include education and work; this latter element emerges, as it was pointed previously, as one of the strongest moral judgements that shape and define the possibility of implementing UBI. It is even suggested that to get the support of UBI beneficiaries must agree to the terms of a labor contract with its obligations such schedule and tasks; even when that might be understood like a reduction of the UBI concept is still interesting to think about this income as an alternative to fight informal work that afflicts most of the Colombian society nowadays.

... In other words, this is basically tied to having access to work, I mean, you have to work, so you can dignify yourself, whatever the condition, people need to have the condition of working, you have to meet certain conditions, at least to comply a schedule and an employment contract (I26).

In this sense, ideas about conditioning to UBI beneficiaries are expressed, especially related to the formation of human capital so it can be incorporate to the formal economic circuit later, through the attainment of a job.

... it can be conditioned, for example, on the children of the beneficiaries, that they should attend school while the main beneficiary demonstrates an appropriate usage of UBI for basic goods, workforce formation and incorporation to the formal work market (I37).

Likewise, is obvious that from interviewees' perspectives, work is a way of dignifying human being, of avoiding social exclusion, and those are the reasons why they see UBI as a complement of other incomes but never as a substitute for work.

... UBI constitutes one of the first steps to recover a human being, a citizen, a society, the citizenship, it makes them useful... through the minimum that is a universal basic income, they find their place in the world, they understand their role in society, understand their place in the State, makes them useful to continue in search of permanent secure formal employment (I24).

Consequently, every activity related to work is associated with happiness, with the possibility of working with dignity, escaping depression, proving that people do it for their own conviction and not for obligation, something which UBI would stimulate significantly. From that, it can be inferred that working is something inherent to most human beings, and they perceive themselves as fulfilled individuals because their accomplishments derived from work.

... I am a person who has always been... active... and inactivity makes me sick... umm... well, inactivity depresses you... When you enjoy your work, it is a happiness for you because there are people who do... who work because

they must, but You don't enjoy what you are doing, so dignity at work is when you enjoy and are 100% committed to yourself and your work (I27).

Then, a moral judgment is born, the one pointing that even when someone is receiving a UBI they would continue working, whether for altruism or selfishness, for finding virtue in it or simply for the ambition of having more achievements in life.

... off course I would continue working... I mean... UBI would be an additional income, but I would definitively keep on doing my tasks, because the more money you have for household support, the better life conditions you have (I33).

Notwithstanding, incentive or disincentive that UBI may have is, however, linked to the handed amount of money, so only if it is a sufficient living wage it is not associated to stop working, but if the amount is bigger, it is perceived as an eventual factor that could discourage work.

... Man, if I have a monthly expenditure of three million Colombian pesos (around 741 USD with 2023 currency) and they give me exactly that amount of money... What would I have the need of working? UBI in many situations could lead to the creation of useless individuals (I31).

Therefore, rupture of work-remuneration binomial, underlying UBI appears, leading to the generation of the necessary impulse for those who dedicate their lives to arts, since they could find sustenance to liberate them from the weight of constantly looking for becoming involved with formal economy to generate incomes for their survival. That way, once liberated from that weight they could release all their creative potential.

... there would be people dedicating their time to recreation, arts, culture, reading, once they don't feel obligated to be involved in a formal productive activity (I37).

Another variable expressed by interviewees is that impact of UBI over life conditions of its beneficiaries is linked to regional and sociocultural environments that generates negative value judgements regarding the possible usage of UBI.

... depends on regional and sociocultural contexts; I assume that in some sociocultural context if UBI is not linked to a mechanism which assures the effective use of that money to fulfill basic needs because otherwise it would be spent on luxuries or different types of expenses that are not necessarily peoples' and citizens' basic needs (I37).

To conclude, it can be affirmed that the fear to UBI unconditional support has its explanation on the presumed discouragement to work that it entails; however, is obvious that for most of the people working is something inalienable to the essence of human being. Accordingly, receiving a UBI does not constitute a setback for work; it can become amotivation for working with passion, self-fulfillment, freedom instead, by releasing human being from the weight of working for survival and allowing them to dream of the whole mankind having that possibility: "... may all people turn our likes and expectations into our source for incomes" (I37).

Implementation Scenario

A group of seven open categories ("political approach," "preparing society," "financing," "political corruption," "supplement to income from working," "additional aid to the existing ones," and "other effects") were grouped into four axial categories ("political approach," "political corruption," "improving the family income," and "other effects") from which the selective category, "implementation scenario" was formed.

In this selective category, perceptions were identified about the possibility of implementing the UBI and everything that surrounds it, such as the political ideology that is assumed to be implicit in the action of allocating a periodic amount of money to all members in a society; the need for compensation on the part of the beneficiaries that is believed should go hand in hand with the implementation; financing; and control mechanisms of the UBI.

The decision of implementing UBI in Colombia gives room for plenty of questionings because there would be a radical change surrounding it. For example, the political approach of UBI is presumed by most of the interviewed people to come from socialism in the face of which there is a strong resistance considering the predominance of open market model in the country.

... well, our democracy nowadays is capitalist, maybe UBI is a matter more related to countries where there is a conversation about changing the model from socialism to communism looking for social balance, but thinking about implementing UBI in Colombia... to be honest... I think is quite difficult (I17).

As it was previously mentioned, the resistance to UBI implementation is based on the alleged transformation attribute to socialism and/or communism where individuals turn into "parasites," becoming completely dependent on State without giving a reward. That is one of the strongest moral judgments surrounding UBI, and the reason why people would resist its implementation. Nonetheless, those same people formulate as ideal societies those where State leads the function of redistributing riches throughout progressive tributary policies reaching either high levels of solidarity and equity or contexts where forces of market operate properly.

... I've talked Venezuelan guys and I've told them: "The fact that you've been handed everything, the State paid for your education, gave you health, gave you a subsidies, gave you a house, gave you everything, turned you into parasites" A progressive State, a State with a mission has to be like the ones from Switzerland or the States... Period!... Places where citizens are actually productive for society (I22).

Another perspective of rejection in the path of UBI implementation has its basis on assuming it as an ideal but utopic situation that would only allow people to receive its support with no merits, statement that do not correspond to the current conditions of State politics. Once again said statements emerge from negative value judgements about the other, about what is "different" to what is assumed as normal.

... well, it would be an ideal situation... for... for... seeking equity, but not everyone has earned it or has the education or training to... to deserve UBI. I suppose that this could be possible in a State in good conditions different from ours, it would be for a socialist state, because this is utopian... (I25).

Unlike, some people perceive UBI as a way of settling the historic debt that State has with Colombian society. From that perspective, UBI might be understood as a path to welfare and a strongest commitment from State in its role of welfare guarantor.

... I think it's the right thing to do in a country where State has been absent, has been frail when taking care of providing services, guarantees, help, subsidies... I think State is historically on debt of granting those minimums to citizens... umm... who have been deprived from guarantees (I24).

On the other hand, current relevant situations such as technological transformations associated with the disruption of artificial intelligence, the automation of processes and tasks, not only physical but also intellectual, may be generating an increase in productivity and, collaterally, of the generation of wealth; but at the same time, they may also be eliminating some jobs and generating others with the consequent impact on the well-being of those affected. In this context, UBI can be a mechanism that serves to redistribute the wealth created and alleviate the impacts derived from the destruction and creation of jobs and even to restore the power of consumption to those who no longer find a place in the productive apparatus.

... if economies increase their productivity... they can increase it taking advantage of the current technological revolution... Well, a State or a society can have income to distribute without the need for the entire society to be linked to the labor market... Why do we need work? To guarantee the basic needs of the population, but we do have a society that does not need to work to generate levels of productivity and to generate the income that must be distributed, because simply the patterns of behavior and the linking of people and individuals The labor market will change, its importance will also change and its priority as a public agenda (I37).

Additionally, financing UBI could come from controlling corruption, a quite present issue throughout Colombian history; and from reducing investment in war and armament existing currently because of military conflict, achievement expected to happen with the late peace agreement signed with the Colombian Revolutionary Armed Forces (FARC from its acronym in Spanish) during 2016.

... inasmuch there's the possibility of facing certain phenomena in which much money is wasted such as corruption and war the implementation of UBI policy could vindicate the role of State with citizenship (I24).

Another possible funding source for UBI could be bonuses that Colombian State collects from natural resources exploitation, this is how similar projects had been implemented in various countries, as it happened in the state of Alaska in the U.S. where through the Alaska Dividend Fund distributes among its population yields derived from mining exploitation within Alaskan territory.

... given the fact that Colombia is a country... umm... very rich in natural resources I think that makes possible for State to grant us citizens this kind of support resulting from royalty payments because there are countries already doing that a long time ago, distributing a part of the country riches to with its inhabitants (I11).

In a similar sense, it is proposed that the UBI could be financed by the development of tourism and the exploitation of marine resources. Tourism in Colombia is increasing as a revenue derived from the peace agreements, which generated confidence and tranquility for tourists to come from abroad (Menchero, 2018). Regarding the wealth in marine resources, this is an economic region that is not very developed in the country, but with high potential for growth, especially if it is associated with ecotourism.

... Colombia could have money because there are plenty of resources, especially in the marine environment... there are resources to exploit and also to sell... For example one of them is tourism, selling tourism, speaking not only about renting a cabin or a hostel, but also diving, snorkeling, kayaking over a mangrove or reefs area... that kind of thing...that kind of ecological tourism could be a source of income and has important potential for our country, a megadiverse country that has everything to attract the attention of developed countries (I29).

Taxes are also considered to be UBI source of financing, as well as austerity of public expenditure, so coincident ideas to certain extent to the Negative Income Tax proposed by Milton Friedman and James Tobin back in the sixty's decade are outlined by interviewees (Friedman, 1982).

... instead of making so much waste... sometimes the government itself... at least some people pay taxes and do something well... One is paying taxes while the streets are a hell of a mess, State shows no compromise, so... umm... UBI should be deducted from taxes (I27).

In addition, those resources that State might save by reducing military expenditures as a result from peace agreements with FARC could be used for granting UBI to Colombian people.

... most part of those resources spent in military conflict and that huge amount of money lost because of corruption... about 50 billion of Colombian pesos yearly (about 12.457.085 US dollars 2023 currency)... accounted by Colombian general accounting office... might be use to grant a UBI and that way at least 50% of the minimum wage (about 324 US dollars, 2023 currency) I think, could be an amount enough to assure... more than anyone... to those social groups with less incomes... assure them access to basic goods and the coverage of their needs (I37).

But the possibility of affording UBI is at odds with the usual focalization mechanisms defined by social expenditure policies from State that are indeed opposed to universal coverage policies. That is why implementing UBI would require deep changes in Colombian government economic, social, and political philosophies, which does not seem to be reachable soon.

... the Colombian government and State have married... so to speak... a social policy criterion that does not correspond to this concept of basic income... Here, focalization as an instrument of public spending has practically become a religion, in matters of public policy... And the focalization mechanism is actually opposed to the criterion of universality, right? With a universal basic income... let's say... focalization is the alternative to universal social

policies...so honestly... I see that our government nor advisors that accompany government in the decision-making processes... from the point of view of political decisions... they have no sensitivity or openness in respect of the basic income concept... I'm talking about the concept we know from the academia (I37).

This leads to what could be understood as a contradiction since, there may be sufficient resources to implement it, but there would be no political motivation to do so.

... There is capacity but there is no willingness... State would have the economic capacity, because if there were no resources then where does all that money they stole... and the corruption... come from? But this is also a matter of attitude and... and a matter of the ideology that these people who are running the country has (I23).

Furthermore, corruption is assumed as a potential motivation to implement UBI because that would redistribute wealth in the country to all the people and not only among those few who by perfidious ways had concentrated it for personal profit. But, at the same time, corruption is the biggest hindrance existent against UBI implementation since it drains out all the resources that might serve as the funding mechanism on delivering a basic income. That is why people think these kinds of impolite behaviors should be modified before implementing UBI.

... until this kind of phenomenon such as corruption is effectively combated, it will be very difficult to guarantee the necessary money for... a universal monthly basic income, I would think that we still have to solve the structural problems of the State that do not allow progress... that hampers... some possible futures, I think those problems are very big obstacles for the application of a public policy such UBI (I24).

Related to that, there is the perspective that if UBI is implemented it could generate a greater corruption phenomenon among politicians because they would capture economical resources set aside for UBI, but they would also give a clientelist use to it.

... by implementing a program like these politicians will have guaranteed votes, for their next campaigns... it would capture votes from people following them or their political ideas if UBI would be one of those ideas (I34).

From a different perspective, some people considers that UBI would transform values and principles upon which social perceptions built around this topic lay and the subsequent behavior of Colombian society derived from them. This transformation requires planning, and it would take place in the long term.

... UBI would imply a social transformation of our country... First of all, people's mentality...Second, changing country's education that starts with the families, changing values, principles... Only if there were a solid strategy and the right levels of culturalization, education and formation around it... that could make possible a change in people's attitude and behavior... but it would take a... long... long time (I25).

That is why the decision of implementing UBI needs to be a gradual and progressive, beginning with the coverage of the families with the greatest needs and going from that to general population coverage gradually. Wherewith a positive impact would be expected over the negative externalities derived, to a certain degree, from poverty.

... UBI would have to be implemented progressively... I mean... I know that there is the economic capacity... to ensure, at least... a... monthly payment... not necessarily per person... but per family... which would help to minimize many situations of... violence, insecurity and all these things that poverty generates... umm... it would have to be something progressive, and it would have to start with families and people in... the most vulnerable conditions (I26).

Furthermore, there must be consider if UBI would impulse inflationary phenomena that might affect citizens' lives: "... I'm sure that once this subsidy is granted there will be an increase on family basket costs" (I13). This means that implementation of UBI comes along with a series of challenges varying from existent public polices, through the modification of productive processes, up to changes in collective and individual values of Colombian society. Said challenges are more focused on the main perceptions people have around UBI rather than its economic viability.

Finally, the decision to implement the UBI must go through a review of the fiscal and budgetary impact that it would have on the treasury: "... because the disadvantage is that the national budget would be quite affected by this type of expense" (I34); and on the productivity of the country: "... in the formulation of public policy, it must try to minimize the risks in relation to... the impact that a basic income policy may have on productivity and on our economy" (I37).

Discussion

The success that the implementation of a public policy may have, to a large extent, is related to the ability of the formulators to frame their proposals within cultural and regulatory contexts, giving them legitimacy within society. For this reason, it is essential to know variables such as institutional realities, real life events, and both discourses and paradigms linked to the dominant political ideas at the historical moment in which the policy is to be implemented (Perkio, 2019). This is connected to the fact that social perceptions vary from society to society; it is not the same to give a UBI in a country with high levels of wealth and equity in its distribution, as in those with high levels of poverty and inequality. Therefore, a particular understanding of them is required for each State or territorial entity (Givedirectly, 2020).

Therefore, in the Colombian case, there are factors such as cultural traditions, social tensions, the individual struggle that each citizen has had to survive, and economic uncertainties that have affected the country, among others. These factors generate moral judgments that lead to social perceptions that they become the matrix on which a public policy like UBI would be developed. In addition, politics in Colombia has been dominated by values of the kind of individuality and the search for development of citizens' life projects without strong support from the State (Carrizosa, 2014). This way of thinking sees the poor and the unemployed as blameworthy for their situation, omitting the part played by structural conditions of the society they lived in (Pfeifer, 2009). The foregoing goes against the precepts of societies, such as the Scandinavian ones, in which there has been a tradition of solidarity and work, channeled throughout a strong presence of the State, which has led to a greater acceptance of the idea of giving citizens a UBI. Thus, the results of this investigation showed that, for Colombians, work is the main value that emerges when judging the possibility of

receiving UBI. It is perceived as unfair that someone receives an income without being employed or without working in exchange of UBI. In addition, it is believed that this would encourage leisure by discouraging the intention of working. This last argument coincides with what those who voted against receiving a UBI in the referendum held in Switzerland (Standelmann & Dermont, 2019).

However, such perceptions are contrary to the findings derived from previous UBI implementation experiences reported in the literature, according to which receiving an income without any conditions did not affect employment rates (Arnold, 2018).

Another relevant perception was the one related to the mistrust in others in relation to the use that people would give to the UBI. In the literature, it is evident that the expected expense of the UBI is for education, not only in youth but also in adulthood; for example, as economic support for retraining for a new occupation or opening a new business (Pateman, 2004). The above matches to a large extent with what was expressed by the interviewees who would use it in education, recreation, investment, and even altruism doing social work.

Nonetheless, these same interviewees, in many cases, considered that their fellow citizens would use it in the consumption of what they classify as vices (alcohol, drugs), generating a moral judgment that indicates UBI money would be “wasted,” a perception that is also expressed by critics of the UBI (Rothstein, 2017).

In addition, one of the main criticisms made of the UBI resides in its unconditional support, since it breaks the historical logic that associates income with work (Rothstein, 2017). This criticism coincides with what was stated by several of the interviewees, who do not understand why they should give an income to those who do not work; why not to force them to work, for example, in social assistance to communities, in return for receiving the UBI.

Another point of debate is the decision of implementing or not UBI, which depends on political intentions rather than a matter of financial viability. The thing is, political intentionality has been critical in the continuity of the various UBI experiences already developed, from the one carried out in the 18th century in Speenhamland-England, to the one developed in Finland (Bregman, 2017).

In all the experiences, the fluctuations of the political debate have affected the possibility of giving continuity to the public policies that have been aimed at guaranteeing UBI: the plebiscite in Switzerland was defeated due to the fears generated about the increase in immigration, the effects on the structure of the State and its economy; the experiences in the United States, in the 1960s, due to the risk of affecting the structure of the traditional family; in Finland, due to the overlap with other social security policies; and in Canada, the experience of Dauphin, due to the rise to power of the Conservative Party, who, without evaluating the social cost-benefit that the UBI could generate, canceled the experiment, considering it financially costly (Forget, 2011; Perkio, 2019; Wispelaere, 2016). In summary, as expressed by Arnold (2018): “policies, rather than data, determine the fate of programs.”

On the other hand, in studies executed in Switzerland and Finland, it was found that those surveyed would prefer the UBI to be complemented with other State social programs; that is, they would expect that UBI works as an additional factor of well-being for citizens and not as a way of building an austere State (Standelmann & Dermont, 2019). In Colombia, the respondents also think of the UBI as an additional income that allows them to solve their economic hardships, derived from low wages and lack of employment, but they do not expect a high stipend, but rather, close to the value of the country's legal minimum wage.

To sum up, if it is desired to implement UBI in Colombia, its development must be accompanied by policies that transform the citizen's fear of receiving gifts from the State, evolving towards citizen awareness, which prioritizes solidarity and equity, that allows them to understand that, in the face of the changing environment and the increase in inequality in

society, the UBI constitutes a right that contributes to the construction of justice and social welfare.

References

- Arnold, C. (2018). *The anti-poverty experiment*. <https://www.povertyactionlab.org/>
- Atkinson, A. (2015). *Inequality: What can be done?* Harvard University Press.
- Berger, P., & Luckmann, T. (1991). *La construcción social de la realidad [The social construction of reality]*. Amorrortu Editores.
- Beveridge, W. (2008). *La seguridad social en Inglaterra, Plan Beveridge [Social Security in England, Beveridge Plan]* (V. Peris, Trans.). Centro Interamericano de Estudios de Seguridad Social.
- Bregman, R. (2017). *Utopía para realistas [Utopy for realists]*. Ediciones Salamandra.
- Bria, F. (22 de mayo de 2017). *El ingreso básico en la economía de los robots [Basic income in robots' economy]*. Le Monde Diplomatique. <http://www.eldiplo.org/archivo/219-la-clase-media-en-tiempos-de-macri/el-ingreso-basico-en-la-economia-de-los-robots?token=&nID=1>
- Bushnell, D. (2014). *Colombia, una nación a pesar de sí misma [The making of modern Colombia: A nation in spite of itself]*. Editorial Planeta.
- Caballero, A. (2018). *Historia de Colombia y sus oligarquías [The story of Colombia and its oligarchies]*. Editorial Crítica.
- Carrizosa, J. (2014). *Colombia compleja [Complex Colombia]*. Jardín botánico José Celestino Mutis de bogotá. Instituto de Investigación de Recursos Biológicos Alexander von Humboldt. <http://hdl.handle.net/20.500.11761/32548>
- Charmaz, K., & Belgrave, L. L. (2012). Qualitative interviewing and grounded theory analysis. In J. F. Gubium, J. A. Holstein, A. B. Marvasti, & K. D. McKinney (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of interview research: The complexity of the craft* (pp. 347-366). SAGE Publications. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781452218403>
- Decreto 518 de 2020. [Decree 518 of 2020]. [Ministerio de Hacienda y Crédito Público] [Ministry of Finance and Public Credit]. Por el cual se crea el Programa Ingreso Solidario para atender las necesidades de los hogares en situación de pobreza y vulnerabilidad en todo el territorio nacional, en el marco del Estado de Emergencia Económica, Social y Ecológica. [Whereby the Solidarity Income Program is created to meet the needs of households in situations of poverty and vulnerability throughout the national territory, within the framework of the State of Economic, Social and Ecological Emergency].04/04/2020.
- Departamento Administrativo Nacional de Estadística [National Administrative Department of Statistics]. (04/18/2020). Pobreza monetaria y multidimensional en Colombia 2012 - Boletín de prensa. https://www.dane.gov.co/files/investigaciones/condiciones_vida/pobreza/boletin_pobreza_2012xx.pdf
- Departamento Administrativo Nacional de Estadística [National Administrative Department of Statistics]. (04/26/2022). Pobreza monetaria año 2021. [Comunicado de prensa]. [Monetary poverty in 2021 – Press release]. https://www.dane.gov.co/files/investigaciones/condiciones_vida/pobreza/2021/Comunicado-pobreza-monetaria_2021.pdf
- Departamento Nacional de Planeación, Departamento Administrativo Nacional de Estadística [National Department of Planning and National Administrative Department of Statistics]. (2012). Misión para el Empalme de las Series de Empleo, Pobreza y Desigualdad – MESEP. 2012. Pobreza monetaria en Colombia: Nueva metodología y

- cifras 2002-2010. Resultados segunda fase de la MESEP. [Mission for the Splicing of the Employment, Poverty and Inequality Series – MESEP. 2012. Monetary poverty in Colombia: New methodology and numbers 2002-2010. Second phase results of the MESEP]. Bogota.
- Friedman, M. (1982). *Capitalism and Freedom*. The University of Chicago Press.
- Forget, E. (2011). The town with no poverty: The health effects of a Canadian guaranteed annual income field experiment. *Canadian Public Policy / Analyse de Politiques*, 237(3), 283-305. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/23050182>
- Givedirectly. (01/10/2020). UBI Study. <https://www.givedirectly.org/ubi-study/>
- Glaser, B., & Strauss, A. (1967). *The discovery of grounded theory: Strategies for qualitative research*. Aldine Transaction.
- Glaser, B., & Strauss, A. (2006). *The discovery of grounded theory: Strategies for qualitative research*. Aldine Transaction.
- Gobierno Nacional de Colombia & FARC [National Government of Colombia and Colombian Revolutionary Armed Forces]. (11/112016). Acuerdo final para la terminación del conflicto armado y la construcción de una paz estable y duradera. [Final agreement for the termination of the armed conflict and the construction of a stable and lasting peace]. <http://www.altocomisionadoparalapaz.gov.co/procesos-y-conversaciones/Documentos%20compartidos/24-11-2016NuevoAcuerdoFinal.pdf>
- Haidt, J. (2012). *The righteous mind: Why good people are divided by politics and religion*. Vintage.
- Keynes, J. (1930). *Las posibilidades económicas de nuestros nietos*. [Economic Possibilities for Our Grandchildren]. https://www.funcas.es/wp-content/uploads/Migracion/Articulos/FUNCAS_PEE/006art18.pdf
- Marx, C., & Engels, F. (2013). *Manifiesto del partido comunista*. [The Communist Manifesto]. Atenea.
- Melzochová, J., & Specián, P. (2015). An estimate of the basic income costs: Case of the Czech Republic. *Procedia Economics and Finance*, 30, 550-557. [https://doi:10.1016/S2212-5671\(15\)01267-8](https://doi:10.1016/S2212-5671(15)01267-8)
- Menchero, M. (2018). Colombia en posconflicto: ¿turismo para la paz o paz para el turismo? [Post-conflict Colombia: tourism for peace or peace for tourism?]. *Araucaria*, 20(39). <https://revistascientificas.us.es/index.php/araucaria/article/view/4914>
- Natera-Gutiérrez, S., & Guerrero-Castañeda, R. (2018). Interaccionismo simbólico y teoría fundamentada: un camino para enfermería para comprender los significados. *Revista de Enfermería y Humanidades - Universidad de Alicante*, 190-199. [Symbolic interactionism and grounded theory: a way for nursing to understand the meanings. *Journal of Nursing and Humanities*].
- Pateman, C. (2004). Democratizing citizenship: Some advantages of a basic income. *Politics & Society*, 32(1), 89–105. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0032329203261100>
- Perkio, J. (2019). *From rights to Activation: The evolution of the idea of basic income in the Finnish Political Debate, 1980-2016*. Finland: Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Tampere.
- Pfeifer, M. (2009). Public opinion on state responsibility for minimum income protection: A comparison of 14 European Countries. *Acta Sociologica*, 117-133.
- Piketty, T. (2014). *Capital in the twenty-first century*. Harvard University Press.
- Pizarro, E., & Moncayo, V. (2015). Contribución al entendimiento del conflicto armado en Colombia. Mesa de Conversaciones para la terminación del conflicto y la construcción de una paz estable y duradera [Contribution to the understanding of the armed conflict in Colombia]. In *Comisión histórica del conflicto y sus víctimas [Historical Commission of the Conflict and its Victims in Colombia]*. Ediciones Desde Abajo.

- Raventós, D. (2007). *Basic income: The material conditions of freedom*. Pluto Press.
- Rawls, J. (1971). *A theory of justice*. Harvard University Press.
- Rawls, J. (2006). *Liberalismo político [Political liberalism]*. Fondo de Cultura Económica.
- Rendón, J. (2010). Renta básica para Colombia: Una opción ante la desigualdad. [Basic income for Colombia: An option in the face of inequality]. *Revista Foro*, 70, 73-83.
- Robinson, J. (2016). La miseria en Colombia [Misery in Colombia]. *Desarrollo y Sociedad* 76(1), 1-70. <https://doi:10.13043/DYS.76.1>
- Rousseau, J. (2013). *Discurso sobre el origen de la desigualdad entre los hombres [Discourse on the origin and basis of inequality among men]*. Editorial Universidad de Antioquia.
- Rothstein, B. (23 de noviembre de 2017). UBI: A bad idea for the welfare state. *Social Europe*. <https://www.socialeurope.eu/ubi-bad-idea-welfare-state>
- Sánchez, J. (2023). Renta básica y justicia: reflexiones para un debate [Basic income and justice: Reflections for a debate]. *Ánfora*, 30(55), 162-175. <https://doi.org/10.30854/anf.v30.n55.2023.924>
- Santos, J., & Cunha, K. (2018). Data analysis: Comparison between the different methodological perspectives of the Grounded Theory. *Revista da Scola de Enfermagem da USP*, 52, e03303. <https://doi.org/10.1590/s1980-220x2017021803303>
- Sen, A. (2004). *Desarrollo y libertad [Development as freedom]*. Planeta.
- Smith, A. (1997). *La teoría de los sentimientos morales [The theory of moral sentiments]* (C. R. Braun, Trans.). Alianza.
- Smith, J., Flowers, P., & Larkin, M. (2008). *Interpretative phenomenological analysis: Theory, method and research*. SAGE.
- Standelmann, I., & Dermont, C. (2019). Citizens' opinions about basic income proposals compared – A conjoint analysis of Finland and Switzerland. *Journal of Social Policy*, 49(2), 383-403. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0047279419000412>
- Stiglitz, J. E. (2012). *The price of inequality: How today's divided society endangers our future*. W. W. Norton & Company.
- Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (2002). *Bases de la investigación cualitativa [Basics of Qualitative Research]*. Editorial Universidad de Antioquia.
- Van Parijs, P. (1995). *Real freedom for all: What (if anything) can justify capitalism?* Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/0198293577.001.0001>
- Van Parijs, P., & Vanderborght, Y. (2017). *Basic income: A radical proposal for a free society and a sane economy*. Harvard University Press.
- Wispelaere, J. D. (2016). The struggle for strategy: On the politics of the basic income proposal. *Politics*, 36(2), 131-141. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9256.12102>

Author Note

Johanna Sareth Acuña Gómez, PhD in Policy Modeling and Public Management Fundación, Universitaria de Ciencias de la Salud. Please direct correspondence to jsacuna1@fucsalud.edu.co. She is a professor and researcher currently working with postgraduate programs in the health field for Fundación Universitaria de Ciencias de la Salud – FUCS in Bogota. Her undergraduate degree is as a dentist.

Wilson Giovanni Jiménez-Barbosa, PhD in Social Sciences, Childhood and Youth, Universidad de Bogotá Jorge Tadeo Lozano. He is a tenured professor and researcher working with postgraduate programs in the health field for Jorge Tadeo Lozano University in Bogota. His undergraduate degree is as a dentist.

Juan Sebastián Hernández Monsalve, MSc. in Management and Health Policy Fundación, Universitaria de Ciencias de la Salud. He is a professor and researcher working

with postgraduate programs in the health field for Fundación Universitaria de Ciencias de la Salud – FUCS in Bogota. His undergraduate degree is as an optometrist.

Copyright 2023: Johanna Sareth Acuña Gómez, Wilson Giovanni Jiménez-Barbosa, Juan Sebastián Hernández Monsalve, and Nova Southeastern University.

Article Citation

Acuña Gómez, J. S., Jiménez-Barbosa, W. G., & Monsalve, J. S. H. (2023). Analysis of the feasibility of universal basic income in Columbia: A grounded theory study. *The Qualitative Report*, 28(11), 3272-3300. <https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2023.6123>
