



Masters of Science in Development Studies

# Universal Basic Income – a Feasible Development Policy for Fragile States?

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## Abstract

Official Development Aid has been the target of criticism for being ineffective, and seldom achieving its goals – particularly in so-called Fragile States. Fragile States, characterized by difficult socio-political conditions frequently throw unexpected challenges at development efforts. New approaches to development have been emerging against this backdrop, one of which is Universal Basic Income. However, there remains a gap in the literature about the feasibility of Universal Basic Income (UBI) as a development policy in Fragile States. Utilizing desk study research and the grounded theory approach, the challenges of UBIs feasibility are analyzed. The thesis concludes with a discussion about the challenges and possible solutions to implementing UBI in Fragile States.

**Keywords:** universal basic income, fragile states, alternative approaches to development aid, implementation challenges.

**Word Count:** 19.674 (excluding in-text citations & footnotes)

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## List of Abbreviations

AAA - Accra Agenda for Action

BIG - Basic Income Grant

COD - Cash on Delivery

CSOs - Civil Society Organizations

DAC - Development Assistance Committee

GBS - General Budget Support

GPRBA - Global Partnership for Results-Based Approaches

NGOs - Non-governmental Organizations

OBA - Output-Based Aid

ODA - Official Development Aid

OECD - Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development

PBAs - Programme-Based Approaches

SDGs - Sustainable Development Goals

SWAps - Sector Wide Approaches

TA - Technical Assistance

UBI - Universal Basic Income

UCT - Unconditional Cash Transfer

USAID - United States Agency for International Development

## 1. Introduction

Absolute poverty is on the decline in most countries – except in so-called ‘Fragile States’ (Baier *et al.*, 2021). Fragile States, characterized by inadequate state and social capacities to mitigate endogenous and exogenous challenges, are the home of 23% of the world's population and – disproportionately – 76.5% of all those living in extreme poverty globally (OECD, 2020). None of the ‘Fragile States’, as identified by the Organization for Economic Co-operation & Development, are on track to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals in relation to most of the indicators; such as hunger eradication, access to healthcare and achieving gender equality (*ibid.*).

Problematically, development efforts in Fragile States habitually fall short from their goals, as difficult socio-political contexts frequently propel challenges that undermine or even negate development projects in the region (Ware, 2014). The lack of efficacy in development projects has been analyzed across disciplines, as evidenced by the emergence of critical literature pertaining to development aid (see Escobar, 1995; Easterly, 2003; Rist, 2019; Moyo, 2009).

Major global development actors, namely the OECD and in particular the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) member countries, have since the mid-2000’s, attempted to address and overcome the sources of criticism in their development practices. First there was the OECD publication, *Paris Declaration for Aid Effectiveness* (2005), followed by the *Principles for Good International Engagement in Fragile States & Situations* (2007) and the *Accra Agenda for Action* (2008). These documents, following the High Level Forums on Aid Effectiveness, recognize ineffective development practices and call for new modalities to development aid; approaches which essentially advocate for less donor conditionalities, more aid recipient country ownership, increased development efforts through non-governmental actors, broader donor harmonization, and responsiveness to country-specific circumstances (Kharas, 2011; Bissio, 2013). Yet despite the initially high engagement with these newly

developed principles, real change in development practices is modest at best (Lundsgaarde & Engberg-Pedersen, 2019; Brown, 2020).

Thus this raises the question, if development projects are particularly enigmatic in Fragile States, yet most of the world's poor inhabit such a context, what is next? How can development challenges be addressed?

One promising and transformative approach to development aid in Fragile State contexts, is implementing Universal Basic Income (UBI) programmes. UBI as a development mechanism is one that has gained significant momentum in recent years in development literature, and in practice (Van Parijs & Vanderborght, 2017). Essentially, Universal Basic Income is a form of welfare in which citizens receive an unconditional (i.e. no means-testing) and periodic cash transfer. As will be elaborated upon in the 'research context' section, UBI is theorized and shown to have a broad array of positive impacts ranging from increased empowerment, community participation, and happiness, to decreased poverty, hunger, indebtedness, and health issues generally (Bastagali *et al.*, 2016; Standing, 2017, 2020). Intrigued by UBI's possible positive effects, governments and non-governmental organizations have taken it upon themselves to conduct experiments with UBI across the globe in countries such as in Finland, Namibia, Kenya, India, USA, Brazil, Uganda, Canada, Iran, Spain and the Netherlands (Gentilini *et al.*, 2020).

The UBI experiments conducted have demonstrated that positive change can be obtained after the implementation of UBI (Hasdell, 2020). But, how suitable is UBI as a development policy in Fragile States? How feasible is it? In this thesis, I will examine the challenges of implementing UBI programmes in Fragile States.

## **1.1 Research Question**

The research question that this thesis is set out to answer is the following: **What are the challenges in implementing Universal Basic Income programs in**



**Fragile States?** This question will be answered through the grounded theory approach to inductively discover said challenges.

## **1.2 Research Aim**

The aim of this study is twofold. Firstly, the aim, in an academic sense, is to narrow an existing research gap and contribute to the body of literature pertinent to alternative approaches to development aid. Stemming from a more moderate school of thought, my thesis argues that development aid is necessary to reduce dire and precarious living conditions, but that simultaneously the approaches to development ought to be reconstructed and renewed in order to circumvent the causes of criticism that are present in Official Development Aid practices. Thus by contributing to a body of literature exploring the potentials of Universal Basic Income as such a development mechanism, particularly in difficult socio-political contexts i.e. in Fragile States, the findings of this research are novel.

Secondly, but relating to the aim above, this research aims to provide pragmatic suggestions for policy-makers considering Universal Basic Income as a development programme in general, and in Fragile States specifically. In development discourse, what is known about UBI is largely based on theoretical texts, or based on case studies. These case studies tend to examine what the results of a particular UBI experiment were, and little is written how the ‘lessons learned’ from a particular experiment could be applied elsewhere. Thus, in the framework of this paper, the phenomena of UBI is analyzed through various levels; firstly, in the ‘Research context’ section of this thesis, UBI is examined theoretically and conceptually. Then, there is a shift from theory into practice and the implementation of UBI is examined through practical examples i.e. the UBI experiments conducted in Namibia, Kenya and Uganda. Lastly, in the analysis and discussion sections, the aim is to once again shift from practice to abstraction and to inductively discover what challenges were present across the cases, and to provide general suggestions for policy-makers based on the findings.

### **1.3 Disposition**

Having now established the research problem that this thesis aims to address, this section is to explain the structure of the thesis, as it differs slightly from typical thesis structure.

First, I will elaborate on the study design, methodology and methods utilized in this thesis. Then, there will be a chapter dedicated to creating the ‘research context’, as opposed to a typical ‘background’ chapter. The research context is titled as such, as it both situates the thesis in relevant literature, but also sets the parameters of the analysis. As this thesis utilizes the Grounded Theory Approach, research contexts not only present the broader literature pertinent to a research problem, but effectively affect the process of data collection, sampling, analysis, coding and theory formulation. As such, it is meritorious to first explain the methodology before embarking on the different levels of analysis.

After the Research Context chapters of this thesis, which constitute ‘high level analysis’, there will be descriptive analysis of UBI cases (i.e. UBI experiments & projects), moving the analysis from abstract to contextual. Finally, based on the data and analysis derived from the UBI cases, a model (“theory”) is offered for understanding the challenges of implementing UBI in Fragile States. Finally, there will be discussion addressing the implications of the findings of this thesis for development aid in Fragile States.

## **2. Study Design & Methodology**

Epistemologically, I have the stance that science and the scientific process is simply an avenue through which we can operationalize our own, and the broader collective’s cognitive capacity. Adhering to a social constructivist and pragmatic school of thought, I argue that the scientific process can only provide a series of observations that can then be contrived to useful theories that can then be applied into practice to explain and predict specific phenomenon. That is to say

that science yields no absolute truths, but rather recognizes patterns, connections and relations between events and people through space and time that are useful. Theories, once accepted by a large enough collective, can then become practical for explaining the happenings of the so-called mutual – or socially constructed – realities (Pernecky, 2016). In other words, theories in social sciences provide a systematic explanation for the observed phenomena that relate to a specific aspect of life (Williamson, 2002). The aim of all research is merely to “advance, refine and expand a body of knowledge, establish facts and/or reach new conclusions using systematic inquiry and disciplined methods” (Chun Tie, 2019; p. 1).

The vessel that perpetuates and frames scientific knowledge and theories is discourse. Discourse just like theories, which Escobar argues is not merely “the expression of thought; it is a practice, with conditions, rules, and historical transformations” (Escobar, 2011; p. 216), can mutate, emerge, be tested, gain credibility or be refuted over time and through debate. Acknowledging this epistemic standpoint in this research is important to justify the selection of methodology and data. The epistemological consequence of this paradigm is the understanding that knowledge and research is *valid* (not necessarily an absolute truth) when it can hold its case in relation to the broader literature and in debate. From this logic, it follows that qualitative (desk) research, which is the nature of the methodology in this paper, provides the researcher with fragments of data on the nature of our conceived and socially constructed reality.

Qualitative research builds from the assumption that useful knowledge can be attained through the study of non-numerical data, such as documents, reports, records, interviews, artifacts, videos and images as these sources of information do not emerge from a vacuum, but rather from a mutually constructed reality (Pernecky, 2016). As such I advocate that the findings of this thesis are tested in relation to other research and supplemented by knowledge from other resources and disciplines. The methodological approach selected for this thesis, the Grounded Theory Approach, also builds from social constructivist perspectives on the ontology of social reality (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

## 2.1 Methodological Framework

This section is devoted to two essential tasks in social science research, for presenting and justifying the methodological approach, and the subsequent methods. In the *methodology* segment, the thesis will be situated in its broader methodological framework; which consists of three activities; (a) defining the problem that is to be investigated, (b) providing the conceptual tools that are necessary to conduct the analysis and finally, (c) to define the limitations of the study design. The *methods* segment consequently describes the techniques of data collection, analysis and coding.

### 2.1.1 Methodology - Grounded Theory

Grounded theory approach emerged in the works of Glaser and Strauss in their consequential 1967 book *The Discovery of Grounded Theory*, a book which has been instrumental in the development of the study design of this research, as well as the works of Charmaz (2014) and Corbin & Strauss (2008) amongst others. Grounded theory approach, argued by Glaser & Strauss, emerged as a reaction to the ‘overemphasis in sociology to verify a theory’, and provided a new perspective on social science research. Contrasting to the main social science tools of their time, Grounded Theory starts with the data; and the eventual theory or model which emerges in the research process is grounded to the data, as opposed to the data refuting or confirming a pre-existing theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The aim of the grounded theory approach is to move beyond descriptions, to discover theories and explanations that can facilitate the understanding of a phenomenon. It is particularly useful for research, where there exists no prior theories or where the previous studies are incomplete.

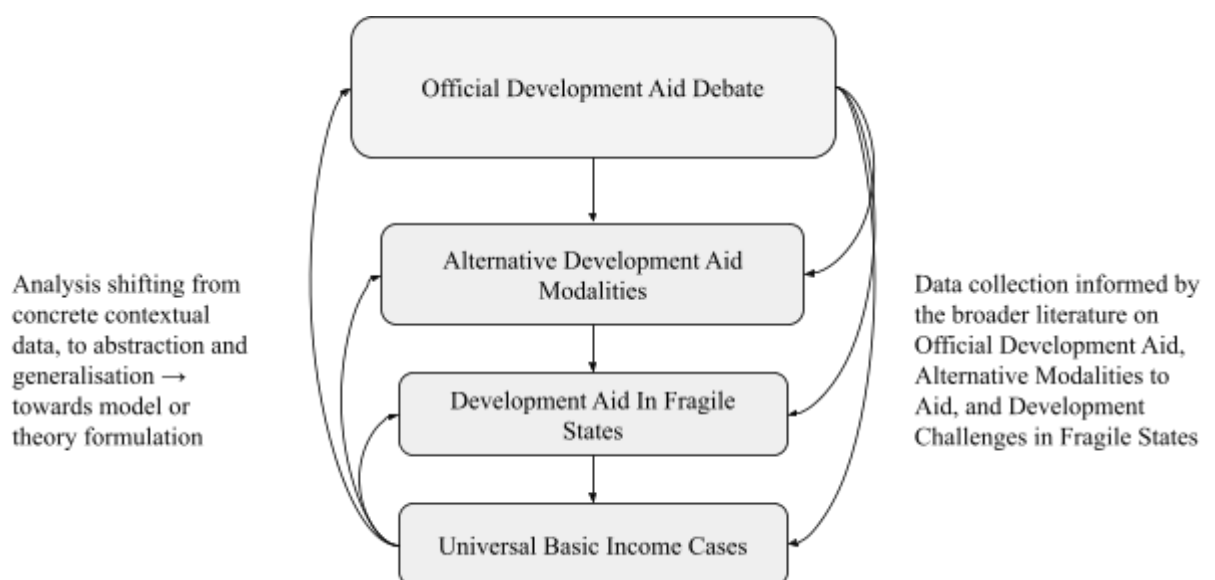
The first step in the grounded theory approach, just like in any research is to establish a research problem i.e. *the interest area of study*. In this particular thesis, the research problem, which will be elaborated upon later, emerged both

from personal interest and by the discovery of insufficient literature pertaining to the problem. Once a research problem is established, a research question ought to be formulated in a manner that provides the investigator sufficient flexibility and freedom to explore the topic in some depth (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). A good research question is one that leads the researcher into the data where the research problem under investigation can be explored (ibid.).

As there is no hypothesis or existing theory to establish, grounded theory approach starts by gathering data. Thus the selection of Grounded Theory Approach also explains in part why the thesis begins with establishing the methodology before engaging with the literature. Data collection is essentially the gathering of information based on the researcher's prior knowledge established by literature review and a thorough understanding of the background (Chun Tie, 2019) and guided by the researcher's area of interest, i.e. research problem. In grounded theory, data collection is called theoretical sampling; it is a method of data collection that is based on categories derived from data that appear relevant, in order to maximize the possibility to develop concepts further (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Thus, data collection is controlled by the emerging theory that happens concurrently. The consequence of this is that conducting the background research, or alternatively the 'research context', in this case about Official Development Aid, Fragile States, Alternative Modalities to Aid and UBI, already constitute for some part of the analysis and guided further theoretical sampling, data collection and analysis. Thus the studying of the background already affects the analysis ("high level analysis"), and the final theory that is derived from it. Furthermore, a defining characteristic of grounded theory as a qualitative research method is that it is iterative; data collection and analysis is cyclical. In other words, in the grounded theory approach, there is constant comparison, which involves making continuous comparison of data at each stage of the analysis (Charmaz, 2014).

At every 'cycle' i.e. iteration of data analysis and collection, the research moves closer to theory formulation. Analysis is essentially the act of giving meaning to the data. As the researcher attains more data, the meanings derived

from the data ought to mutate and change throughout the research process; analysis involves “taking apart data, conceptualizing it and developing those concepts in terms of their properties and dimensions in order to determine what the parts tell us about the whole” (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; p. 119). In other words, Charmaz states that “successive levels of abstraction through comparative analysis constitute the core of grounded theory analysis” (2014; p. 581). Raw data whether it be documents, reports, testimonials, videos, photos, records, interviews etc. is coded, typically open-ended or thematically. These codes are eventually grouped through axial coding i.e. by finding connections between the codes. Finally, the aim is to discover one (or more) core category that forms the basis for the consequent theory.



According to Glaser and Strauss (1967), there are two different kinds of theory that can be derived from grounded theory: substantive and formal theory, both of which are so-called middle range theories, situated in between grand theories and minor working hypotheses (p. 33). Formal theory derives from theoretical formulations, from the study of more abstract and ambiguous research topics, such as the study of perspectives, behavior, stigma, sozialisatation etc.

Substantive theories, on the other hand, emerge from more tangible, practical and empirical areas of study. As this thesis revolves around the practical implementation of Universal Basic Income as opposed to the perceptions of its implementation, the final theory of this thesis is a substantive one. The strength of generating a substantive theory is that it allows the researcher to be more faithful to the data, rather than trying to make the findings fit pre-existing theories. Particularly for this research problem, where there exists extensive literature on how UBI can be implemented in theory, having this freedom in research allows for more objective findings and being less biased theoretically (ibid.).

### **2.1.2 Problem formulation**

The problem that this thesis investigates, is quite clearly represented by the research question. However, it does not indicate as to what is the approach to answering it. Essentially, there are a few different approaches to answer the research question.

The first approach, which is an apparently popular one in the literature, is theoretical and/or speculative in its nature. That is to say, that authors formulate a research problem such as *how can UBI be implemented*, focusing on the *how*, and not on the *implemented* and they typically draw from theoretical texts analyzing the pro's and con's of UBI in combination with some macroeconomic analysis. Guy Standing's article, *Basic Income Pilots: Uses, Limitations and Design Principles* (2021) comes closest to the study design of this paper with one major distinction however. Standing focuses more on *how* the UBI ought to be *designed* (i.e. should it be targeted or not, should it be periodic or not etc.) and not on the actual mechanisms of *implementation* i.e. who are the stakeholders, through what mechanism is the cash transferred etc. Standing's article also builds from a number of assumptions that are not addressed e.g. well functioning financial institutions, access to banking and formal documentation etc.

Another popular strand of literature in UBI discourse is case studies. The implementation of UBI is discussed in a narrow, case-specific context, on how in a

particular country-context an UBI experiment was conducted and its results (see Bastagali *et al.*, 2016). These texts are informative, provide great insights and furthermore constitute a great bulk of the materials utilized in this thesis. However, they seldom go further than that. In the context of this thesis, the findings of case studies are analyzed through another level of abstraction, in other words, what can be learned from these case studies to implement UBI in other fragile state contexts. As such, the Grounded Theory approach can facilitate in creating a theory to describe the challenges that are present in fragile states for the implementation of an UBI programme.

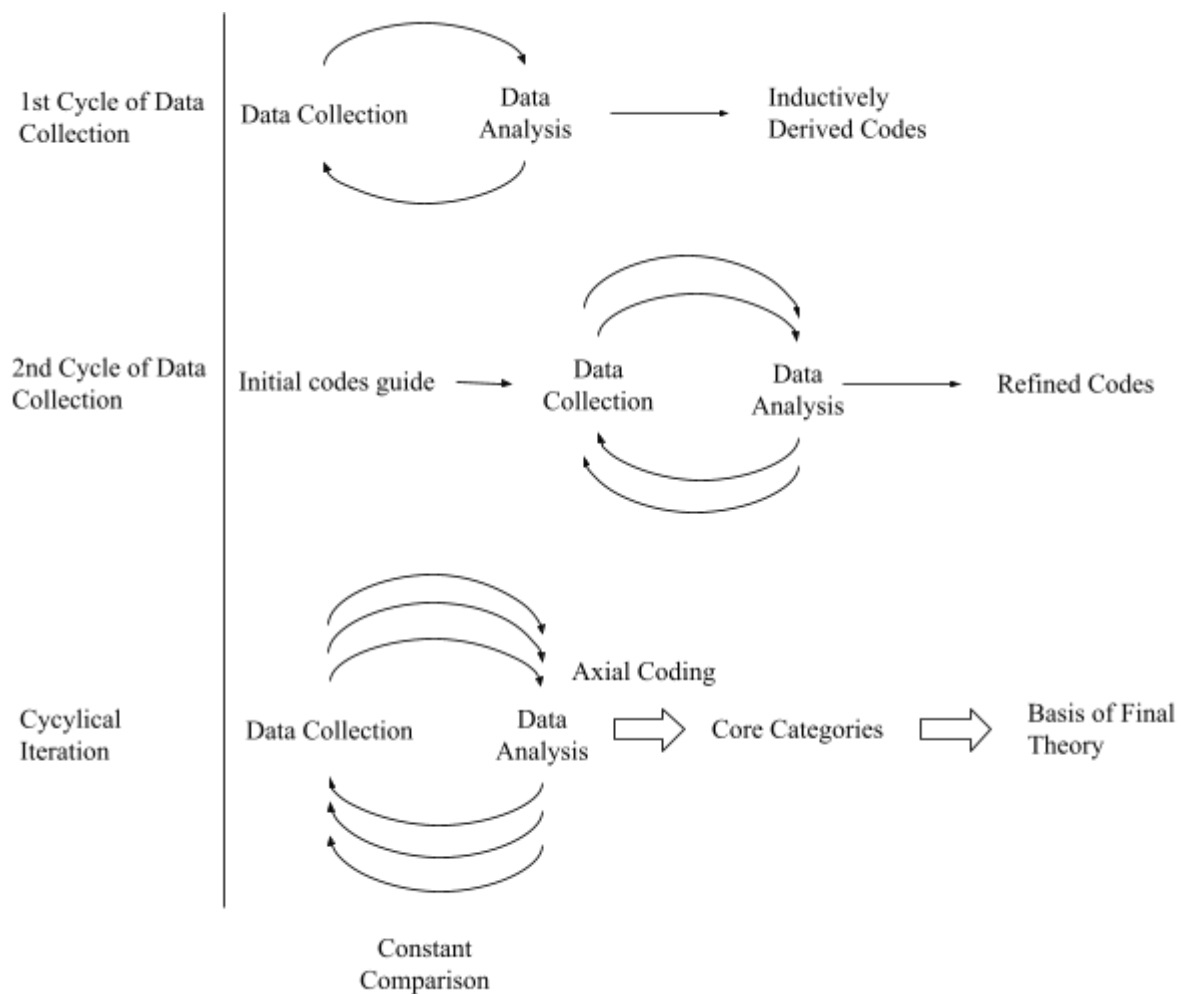
### 2.1.3 Conceptual tools

Utilizing the grounded theory approach for this thesis is useful for a variety of reasons. Regarding the implementation of an UBI in a fragile context, there exists extensive literature on its potential, but much of what is known stems from theoretical studies. By utilizing the grounded theory approach, the aim is to supplement these existing theories (see, Standing, 2017) with perspectives from practical examples; to form a substantive theory that can provide new insights to the challenges of implementing UBI as observed in empirical cases, rather than theorized.

There are two major conceptual tools at the heart of this methodological approach, **induction** and **iteration**. As argued, this research is designed not to test a hypothesis or a previous theory, but to discover what are the challenges present in UBI programmes. Ultimately, the aim of this research is to **inductively** ‘discover’ what challenges, preconditions, and prerequisites were in place across various UBI experiments/cases/examples and examine whether there are similarities across the different examples, as grounded theory is a method that permits the researcher to inductively derive new theories based on continuous and iterative analysis of real world data (Charmaz, 2014). Once these challenges are identified, the aim is to construct a series of recommendations and propositions (a theory/model). Grounded theory approach, an inherently inductive approach



provides the researcher with the freedom to conduct its analysis in such a manner. The other concept, **iteration**, indicates that as the analysis is conducted, findings from one case ought to be compared to findings from another to synthesize a more broad understanding of the phenomenon.



In order to answer the research question, *what are the challenges in implementing Universal Basic Income programs in Fragile States* with a higher degree of validity, one of the additional tools adopted in this thesis is the use of **cases**. Charmaz states that “An emerging grounded theory can indicate needing more than one type of analysis.” (2014; p. 585). Utilizing the epistemological tools from grounded theory in conjunction with the study of cases, aims to demonstrate that the integration of methods is to create a greater finished thesis

than would have been attained by only utilizing separate methods. “Case study research is designed to “explain, explore, or describe a phenomenon of interest” (Ellram, 1996, p. 94) whereas the use of case study refers to the provision of cases that enables engagement in discussions and debate as well as making decisions and solving problems in a real-life context” (Ellinger & McWhorter, 2016; p. 2).

## **2.2 Methods and Data**

### **2.2.1 Data Sources**

For this research, the analysis will build from secondary data accessed through Lund University Libraries as well as websites, videos, reports, documentaries, recorded conversations, transcribed conversations, previous research, as well as some UBI recipient testimonials gathered from various sources. The aim is to have as broad an array of sources as possible, in order to construct a thorough understanding of what the process of implementation was in each case.

### **2.2.2 The use of cases**

Case studies are a powerful research tool for examining how a phenomenon, such as a policy or a practice, impacts various aspects of society (Barlett & Vavrus, 2016). Case studies are an in-depth description and analysis, where the context and studied phenomena are interlinked. The strength is its capability as a tool to attain a rich and detailed account of a phenomenon, if done correctly and appropriately anchored in real-life situations (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015; p. 37).

A recurring critique to the case study approach as a methodological approach, is the lack of generalisability of the findings. However Flyvbjerg (2006) argues that the “difficulty in summarizing case studies is due to the properties of

the reality studied, not the research method” (p. 241). Thus, whether or not the findings of the thesis are applicable to other contexts depends on what is the object of study, and what the case study is used for. It is not the aim of this research to predict whether certain results of the UBI can be reproduced in Fragile states, but rather can the UBI project itself be reproduced. The inclusion of multiple cases, as will be elaborated, will enhance the external validity of this research. As such, the findings emerging from a case study can be reinforced, and generalisability increased further by taking a *comparative* case study approach. Case studies are an effective way of assessing the impact of a policy and practice; a *comparative* case study further reduces noise in the analysis, ensuring that the findings stem from the policy and not due to other exogenous factors (Barlett & Vavrus, 2016); to discover key UBI factors contrasting to key country factors. That is to say that the precision and validity of the findings about the phenomenon are stronger, when it is shown to emerge across various contexts.

In the forthcoming ‘Descriptive Analysis’ chapter, I will be presenting the three examples of Universal Basic Income experiments that have been conducted in three different state settings, in **Kenya**, **Uganda** and **Namibia**. The aim of the examples, as explained in the methodology, is to attain insights on the implementation of UBI across different Fragile States.

Having said that, the selection of UBI projects to be included in this thesis is based on four factors; first, the case must be an UBI experiment, as opposed to, for instance Conditional Cash Transfers or Microfinance experiments. Secondly, the experiments must have been conducted in fragile contexts; Kenya and Uganda are on OECD’s Fragile States list, whilst Namibia, albeit scoring much higher in the Fragile States Index still has persistent challenges with inequality (Namibia is the world’s 2nd most unequal country after South Africa (World Economics, 2015)), amongst other social indicators. Thirdly, all the selected cases are in Sub-saharan Africa, a selection which is guided by the ultimate aim of this thesis. As the aim of this thesis is to contribute to a body of knowledge facilitating the implementation of alternative approaches to development in fragile contexts, many of which are situated in Sub-saharan Africa (see figure 1.), the goal is that

the findings of this thesis would more easily translate to other Sub-saharan contexts. Lastly, thorough comparative case analysis requires maximum variation sampling strategy (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Whilst the selection of cases are in Sub-saharan Africa, the UBI experiments are conducted by different organizations, with varying approaches and methods. The analyses of these three different implementations and approaches to UBI, across the various contexts ought to facilitate an in-depth understanding.

### **2.2.3 Theoretical sampling - data collection**

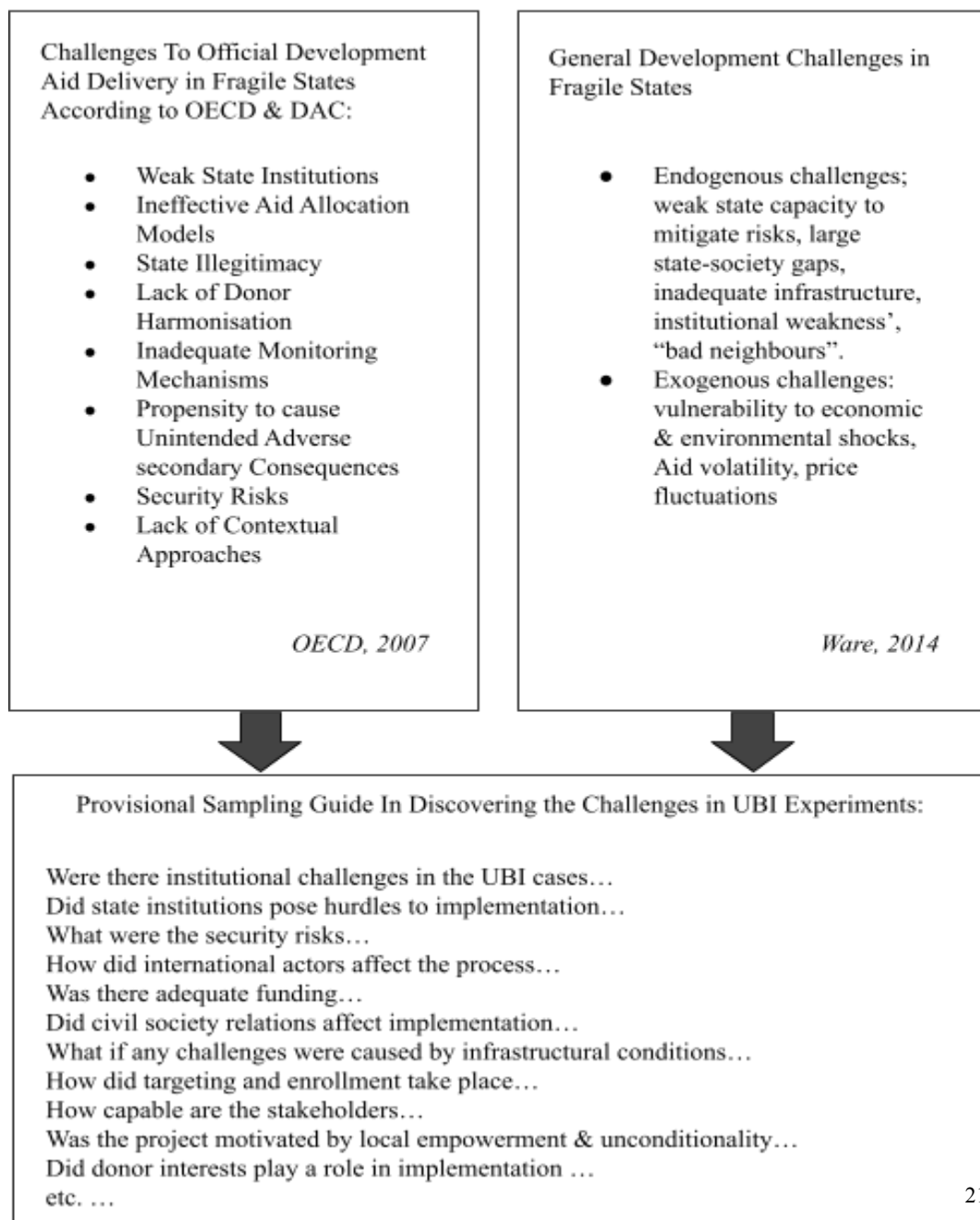
Theoretical sampling in grounded theory approach refers to data collection with particular attention paid to collecting data that appears relevant. At every cycle of data collection, the researcher can discover new areas of study that appear pertinent to the research problem. Thus to reach the ultimate aim of answering the research question, there are a number of ‘hidden’ factors that ought to be addressed in the process of achieving this goal. In order to truly understand how UBI was implemented, it requires responses to questions such as; what were the conditions prior to the experiment; how was the experiment carried out in practice; what challenges and hurdles were in place according to the sources? These discoveries during the cyclical, comparative analysis of the data furthered data collection procedures. A visual representation of the sampling process is in the model underneath.

The first question, what were the conditions prior to the experiments, helps us establish the context in which the experiment is taking place. Interesting observations about poverty rates, well-being, education levels, and the general ‘fragility’ of the region will indicate as to whether an UBI can be implemented in areas with similar conditions. Whilst it would be beneficial to construct a historical understanding of each region studied in the selected cases, due to scope constraints, this is not feasible, however a general understanding will be established.

The second question, how it was carried out in practice, is the heart of this thesis. Particular focus will be placed on the actors who carried out the programme, how they transferred the grant, how they received the funding, what was the size of the grant as well as other descriptive aspects of the project itself.

Lastly, the conducted background research poses another angle for analysis. Whilst researching specific cases, as a researcher I had to relate back to the literature on Fragile States. In other words, there was constant comparison between what was learned about UBI implementation in a specific case, and how that would translate into other fragile contexts.

### Sampling Guide



#### **2.2.4 Coding**

Coding is an essential part of the grounded theory approach, as codes are a fundamental part of giving meaning to the data. In this research I coded my data utilizing an excel spreadsheet, as opposed to doing it manually (by hand), or by utilizing coding software such as Nvivo. As I gathered data, whether documents, websites, videos, or reports, I would paste the link and/or the title of the document onto my spreadsheet. I would then code the documents with simple keywords that I thought would be relevant such as: ‘mobile money agent’, ‘networks’, ‘NGOs’, ‘fundraising’, ‘political issues’ etc. Oftentimes, a single data source would have multiple codes. As the process of coding advanced, I would recognize patterns, e.g. the codes titled ‘electricity’, ‘phones’, and ‘cash’ all pertain to the transfer mechanism of the grant, whereas codes such as ‘funding’, ‘governor approval’, ‘village elders’ would relate to challenges prior to the launch of the programme. Similarly, I would add the literature that pertains to the background section of this paper into the same spreadsheet. For instance, the literature relating to fragile states would produce codes such as ‘institutional limitations’, ‘weak governance structures’, ‘potentials of NGOs’ etc. Ultimately, the analysis section of this paper is built on a synthesis of the codes discovered from the UBI cases and the background literature to arrive at a level of abstraction where the challenges of implementing the UBI in the *cases* is related to fragile states in *general*.

#### **2.3 Significance**

Research is a fundamental pathway for engaging in socio-political process’ and social change (Mason, 2018). Research can impact eventual policies, practices and forms of engagement in the social arena. Research in the field of development studies in particular, can have long lasting, broad and robust implications to the social structures of a region – so much so that the OECDs principles state ‘do no harm’ as the second principle in engagement in difficult contexts. Thus the

objective of this thesis is to mitigate possible shortcomings in development practices by contributing to a body of knowledge that facilitates more comprehensive and informed decision-making. This research can, in conjunction with other sources, provide decision-makers with new information to approach development in fragile contexts, which ought to reduce the risk of adverse and unintended consequences of development policy. This thesis furthermore contributes to a body of literature that advocates for new and alternative modalities to development aid – a body of literature that is largely dominated by more theoretical texts, lacking in more concrete, pragmatic and solution-oriented research.

## **2.4 Limitations**

The study design for this research ought to produce meaningful insights on the challenges, prerequisites, and preconditions for running an UBI experiment/programme. Prerequisites in this context refer to conditions in a region that must be in place before an UBI programme in practice ought to even be considered. However, there are certain limitations that emerge due to methodological reasons. First and foremost, the materials acquired for this research come largely from synthesizing from existing research, literature and reports. As such, the blindspots that may be inherent in this data may be reproduced in the analysis section of this thesis. In a similar vein, the findings of this research would be significantly improved by *in situ* research, conversations and data collection that might bring insights that may have otherwise been missed.

Furthermore, an inherent limitation of the grounded theory approach is the subjectivity of data saturation, which is arguably present in this thesis as well. In order to have a feasible scope of study area, the focus is specifically set on examining Universal Basic Income experiments, although with more time and resources, the analysis would greatly benefit from the inclusion of other similar welfare schemes, such as targeted cash transfers schemes, or conditional cash

transfer schemes to analyze how they overcame issues of e.g. targeting, funding, transfers etc.

Another limitation inherent to the chosen methodology, is that the findings are not absolute, but rather open for further debate and expansion of ideas. As Corbin and Strauss express about the ‘double-edged sword’ present in their methodology: “Flexibility and openness are linked with having learned to sustain a fair amount of ambiguity. The urge to avoid uncertainty and to get quick closure on one's research is tempered with the realization that phenomena are complex and their meanings not easily fathomed or just taken for granted.” (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; p. 33). Thus, the final product of this thesis is a list of propositions for a policy-maker considering UBI, but the list is not exhaustive, nor is it complete, but rather a series of findings based on the data selected for this thesis.

### **3. Research Context**

The inspiration for this thesis was triggered by reading Anthony Ware’s (2014) book *Development in Difficult Socio-political contexts*. In this book, I discovered that an increasing proportion of the world’s poor inhabit so-called Fragile States, whilst simultaneously development efforts in these contexts habitually fail. Why? Perplexed by this relationship, I dived further into literature pertaining to Fragile States and the shortcomings of Official Development Aid in such contexts. The literature further guided me to explore notions of Alternative Approaches to Development Aid that are aimed to mitigate development aid shortcomings in Fragile States. Consequently, I pondered whether an alternative development aid mechanism of my personal interest, Universal Basic Income, is feasible or indeed suitable for such development contexts? Thus developing the research question of this thesis: **What are the challenges in implementing Universal Basic Income programs in Fragile States?**



In order to situate this research question into the broader development aid debate, and to facilitate analysis that yields pragmatic solutions, these following chapters on ‘research context’ provide the framework of this thesis. The research context consists of analyzing four central notions pertinent to answering the research question, based on the problem formulation and research aims. The four central concepts are: (a) Conventional Modalities to Development Aid; (b) Characteristics of Fragile States; (c) Alternative Modalities to Development Aid, and finally (d) Universal Basic Income.

### **3.1 Conventional Modalities to Development Aid**

Following OECDs and DAC definitions, in this thesis, ‘Conventional modalities’ refer to approaches to development cooperation that have been established, accepted and practiced by major (western) development agencies as the orthodox strategy through which to engage with in developing countries. These conventional approaches typically take the form of Official Development Assistance, where funds are transferred bilaterally or through multilateral agencies (Keck, 2015).

Historically, most Official Development Aid (ODA), was provided through project aid, loans and technical assistance (TA). ODA in the historical sense is defined as:

*“... government aid designed to promote the economic development and welfare of developing countries. Loans and credits for military purposes are excluded. Aid may be provided bilaterally, from donor to recipient, or channeled through a multilateral development agency such as the United Nations or the World Bank. Aid includes grants, "soft" loans and the provision of technical assistance” (OECD, 2021)*

However in more contemporary times, other modalities have been developed and widely adopted for practical delivery of development aid: generally described as Programme-based approaches (PBAs). The modalities include: general budget support (GBS), sector-wide approaches (SWAs), and results-based approaches (RBA), amongst a few other aid modalities (Feeny & Donahue, 2014; p. 93; OECD, 2012). Notably, each of the modalities named above can have different variations in different contexts, as these terms are somewhat broad. These modalities, emerging in the early 1990's epitomized dissatisfaction relating to fragmented project aid and prescriptive adjustment lending (Peters et al., 2013). Against the backdrop of widespread dissatisfaction in development aid emerged the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (2005), that stressed the need for new initiatives in aid to supplement technical assistance and project aid (Lundsgaarde & Engberg-Pedersen, 2019). Contrasting to technical assistance and project aid, the aim of these modalities is primarily to increase host country leadership of the development project; to simplify the programme framework and reduce duplication; and to increase the use of local systems for development implementation (Sjöstedt, 2013). These three modalities, which will be elaborated upon below, emerged as a reaction to the Paris Declaration.

Furthermore, and particularly pertinent to the second central notion of the research context – Fragile States – the OECD published another paramount document complementing the Paris Declaration, “*Principles for Good International Engagement in Fragile States and Situations*” in 2007. The document, endorsed by the DAC members, is “designed to support existing dialogue and coordination processes, not to generate new ones” (OECD, 2007).

The *principles* are as follows:

1. Take context as the starting point,
2. Do no harm,
3. Focus on state-building as the central objective,
4. Prioritize prevention,

5. Recognise the links between political, security and development objectives,
6. Promote non-discrimination as a basis for inclusive and stable societies,
7. Align with local priorities in different ways in different contexts,
8. Agree on practical coordination mechanisms between international actors,
9. Act fast...but stay engaged long enough to give success a chance,
10. Avoid pockets of exclusion.

OECD states “The long-term vision for international engagement in fragile states is to help national reformers to build effective, legitimate, and resilient state institutions, capable of engaging productively with their people to promote sustained development. “ (p. 1). Whilst this statement sounds altruistic, how do these modalities occur in practice? In the next sections, I will address this question presenting three conventional development approaches habitually practiced by DAC members.

## I. General Budget Support

General Budget Support is simply the supplementation of capital to the recipient country's national budget. The premise is that it allows the recipient country to utilize the capital through its own financial systems - on agreed upon priorities - strengthening the financial system of the recipient county and cutting costs of more complex transaction processes, as advocated by the Paris Declaration. While GBS is typically provided devoid of donor-specified projects, it still prerequisites functional, and good relationships with the donor county; meaning that GBS is suited only for a limited number of countries (Leidered, 2010; p. 1). Research has shown that the donor country's decision to provide development aid is highly dependent on its own self-interest, the recipient country's UN voting habits, as well as general ‘trends’ in the development ‘industry’ (Einarsdóttir & Gunnlaugsson, 2016). GBS has shown to have some positive impacts in terms of

“strengthening the quality of policy dialogue, transparency and accountability in budget management, and enhancing donor coordination” (Leidered, 2010). Relating back to OECDs *principles*, GBS can be successful in enhancing state capacity and simplifying coordination between international actors. However, it is an unsuitable modality with states with weak or corrupt public financial management systems and ineffective monitoring systems (Feeny & Donahue, 2014; p. 96); which is the case for many fragile states.

## II. Sector-Wide Approaches

According to a Development Assistance Committee (DAC) paper, a sector-wide approach is a “specific, time-bound and costed set of actions and activities which support a sector strategy...such as a national poverty reduction strategy, a sector programme, a thematic programme or a programme of a specific organization” (OECD; 2006; p. 37). In SWAs, donors agree to contribute to a single ‘basket’ of funds, which is then utilized by the recipient government in a national sector-wide plan (Garner *et al.*, 2000). Again the aim of SWAs is to establish county ownership and strengthen existing systems; albeit with clearly defined purpose with the allotted aid. SWAs have been undertaken in countries such as Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Tonga, Vietnam, Zambia, and Uganda across various sectors, such as healthcare and education (ibid.; OECD, 2006; Garner *et al.*, 2000), with varying levels of success. The merit of sector-wide approaches, opposed to General Budget Support, is its focus on avoiding pockets of exclusion. However, preconditions for SWAs are difficult to meet for many fragile states, such as relatively stable political and macroeconomic conditions, effective governments and consensus between aid donor and recipient. Thus SWAs have great potential, but nevertheless situations for applying them in practice are scarce.

### III. Results-Based Approaches

Output-based aid, and its close relative, cash on delivery (COD), are two models of aid delivery that can be otherwise described as “Results-Based Approaches”. Essentially, the aid recipient is expected to achieve certain predetermined targets, such as constructing roads, internet and mobile networks, or providing electricity. In output-based aid, the donor country may subsidize some of the costs of the projects (by providing a proportion of funds), whereas in COD, the recipient country will only receive the payment once the targets are met in full (Birdsall *et al*, 2010). As such, the aim is to fortify country ownership of development projects. The World Bank, in association with the leading organization in OBA approaches – Global Partnership for Results-Based Approaches (GPRBA) – have conducted a number of studies and projects with OBA in Ghana, Gaza, Myanmar, and Bangladesh pertaining, amongst others, to building electricity networks, waste management, water & sanitation projects, and reproductive health programmes (GPRBA, n.d.). OBAs are particularly enticing for the donor country, as they can clearly exhibit and illustrate to their national stakeholders (i.e. taxpayers) the efficacy of a project, as OBAs revolve by setting clearly defined goals and achieving them. Shortcomings appear however, as it can lead to warping in resource allocation and falsification of results in the recipient country, possibly causing more harm than good, in the interest of receiving the ‘promised cash’. Furthermore they are expensive to monitor, susceptible to donor interests and unless the project is launched with thorough and nuanced understanding of the context, target populations may not be reached.

#### *Actors in Official Development Aid*

These different forms of Official Development Aid typically are most commonly channeled bilaterally, or through a multilateral agency such as the World Bank, UN, or other International Agencies. However, actors in development increasingly advocate supplementing bilateral and multilateral

approaches to aid by Non-Governmental Organizations and private organizations, particularly after the Paris Declaration for Aid Effectiveness (Duncan, 2019 p; 237). For reference, between 2008 and 2013, 16% of ODA from DAC countries was channeled through NGOs (Global Initiatives, 2016). Remittances and private aid channeled through NGOs is the fastest growing type of aid financing, a growth of 242% over 2000-2016, although exact figures are hard to find, due to a lack of official measuring statistics. Thus there exists great potential for increasing development cooperation with Non-governmental organizations.

### **3.2 Fragile States**

In this section, I will present the different uses of the term ‘Fragile State’ and examine in detail the nature of their development challenges.

#### *What are Fragile States?*

The concept of ‘Fragile States’ (or weak states) in development discourse initially emerged in the 1990’s, but gained significant traction post 9/11 (Ware, 2014; p. 26). Arguably the first academics to refer to ‘weak states’ as ‘fragile’, Helman & Ratner (1993), against the backdrop of the end of the cold-war, describe a fragile state as a “...state, utterly incapable of sustaining itself as a member of the international community” (p.3). From this rather western-centric statement, it is evident that fragility was measured against a state's willingness to cooperate or uphold the regime of allies i.e. whether or not a state was willing to accept changes in policy and practice in exchange for aid and support.

According to Ware (2014), another central aspect in the early definitions of Fragile States was conflict and security risks and the terminology was justified by drawing from conflict and peace-building discourse. It was conceptualized that the most Fragile States posed international security threats, such as terrorism, crime

and human trafficking, and therefore humanitarian aid came in conjunction with national security conditionalities (ibid.). Carment and Samy (2009), argue that the early literature pertaining to fragile states consequently mainly revolved around two areas, development or security. However, their subsequent research showed that fragility is not directly correlating with war or worse human rights, democracy or development aid levels, but rather low levels of human development and therefore argued for a redefining of the term fragile states itself.

In recent literature, the term ‘Fragile States’ itself is contested and ambiguous, as different development agencies tend to have different definitions. The British Department for International Development (DFID) for instance defines Fragile States as “those where the government cannot or will not deliver core functions to the majority of its people, including the poor” (2005; p. 5), which indicates a clear shift from peace-building discourse to development discourse. The OECD aligns closer with DFID’s definition of fragility, stating that: fragility is the combination of exposure to risk and insufficient coping capacity of the state, systems and/or communities to manage, absorb or mitigate those risks. Fragility can lead to negative outcomes including violence, poverty, inequality, displacement, and environmental and political degradation” (OECD, 2020). However, regardless which definition is utilized, a central theme is that the *state* is described as fragile, and that in turn affects the population in general; with weak state capacity, basic services to citizens such as social insurance, healthcare, education and security are compromised. Thus there is a tangible shift from security related terminology to more humanitarian terms.

However, a growing number of academics and policy-makers advise against using the term itself, as it builds upon the assumption that the ‘state’ is what causes the fragility, as opposed to a more contextual understanding where a state’s fragility can be caused by external factors, such as environmental shocks, economic shocks, ‘bad neighbors’, or myriad other reasons. It is a controversial term also due to its “western-centric approach to social order and political stability” (Nay, 2013; p. 332) that undermines other understandings of development, stability and statehood. The term is also used to ‘other’ states from

Western development hegemony (Ware, 2014; p. 304). Furthermore, according to Nay (2013), most studies about fragile states are based on simplistic analysis of political institutions, where the role of civil society and other factors are excluded. However, despite its controversy and contestation, 'Fragile States' as a term has gained legitimacy through its use by institutions such as the OECD, World Bank, the DAC countries and other international donor agencies. It is also a problematic term, for once labeled a 'Fragile State', this in turn will affect the amount of Official Development Aid (ODA) that these states receive and their relationship with the global community in general. In a Committee for Development Policy paper, Alonso *et al.* (2014; p. 20-22) note that the label of a fragile state "affects international priorities and, specifically, donor aid allocation decisions".

The aim of this section of the background context was to understand the different definitions of Fragile States; what characterizes Fragile States and what hurdles to development exist in Fragile States.

#### *Revising Fragility & Implications for Development*

In the 2014 book titled "Development in Difficult Sociopolitical Contexts" the author Anthony Ware provides a comprehensive and critical analysis of the conceptual framework of Fragile States, as well as a number of case studies of development in what he calls difficult socio-political contexts. Like other critical authors, he defers from using the term 'Fragile States', for reasons to which we will return to later, but reluctantly utilizes it in a critical manner attempting to address the reasoning and underlying assumptions of the development agendas of international donors (Ware, 2014; p. 299). However, he does concur, that there are states that have multidimensional factors of vulnerability, and the term can be applied to such states; so long that this term is utilized in a contextualized and clearly defined manner, not as an umbrella word for all states with 'hindered' development. Ware argues: "The predominant terminology in the literature ... has been that of fragile or failed states, which carries with it an implicit conceptualisation of the cause of the problem as being located within the state"



(ibid.; p. 29). According to this dogmatic conceptualisation then, it therefore logically follows that development aid and approaches ought to be targeted at building state capacity. ‘Conventional’ development approaches, which were presented above typically are designed to do exactly that, albeit with insufficient efficacy. The counterargument is thus that fragility ought to be understood through a multidimensional lens, and the conclusion that state-building is the most efficient strategy for remedying the situation might be premature. Naudé et al. (2011) support the multidimensional approach, and argue that the OECD and DAC definitions are static and *ex post* definitions.

The critics suggest incorporating more variables in the concept of fragility; particularly pertaining to the role of civil society, and external factors. Ware (2014; p. 30) for instance, argues that the operationalisation of fragility ought to include; structural and economic factors (e.g. poverty, low income, natural resources, demographic stress etc.), political and institutional factors (e.g. legitimacy, crisis, conflict, coups, poor governance, oppression, corruption, form of governance, neopatrimonialism etc.), social factors (inequalities, identity fragmentation, exclusion, gender inequality, lack of social cohesion, weak civil society etc.) and international factors (e.g. colonial legacy, international political economy, development dependency, risk of external shocks, climate change and economic shocks, etc.). Kingsbury (2014; p. 55-59), aligned with Ware, stresses two most important contributors to fragility: poor governance (namely limited capacity and corruption) and social and structural failures (namely weak social contract, capability and will) .

On the other hand, OECD and country members of the Development Assistance Committee, whilst admittedly in recent years integrating more dimensions to fragility, still center the state in the heart of fragility, both as the cause and the mechanism through which it can be remedied as indicated by the Paris Declaration. In an OECD paper, they state that “The OECD began by conceptualizing fragility as a binary: contexts were either fragile or they were not.” (Desai & Forsberg, 2020; p. 9). At present, while a more multidimensional

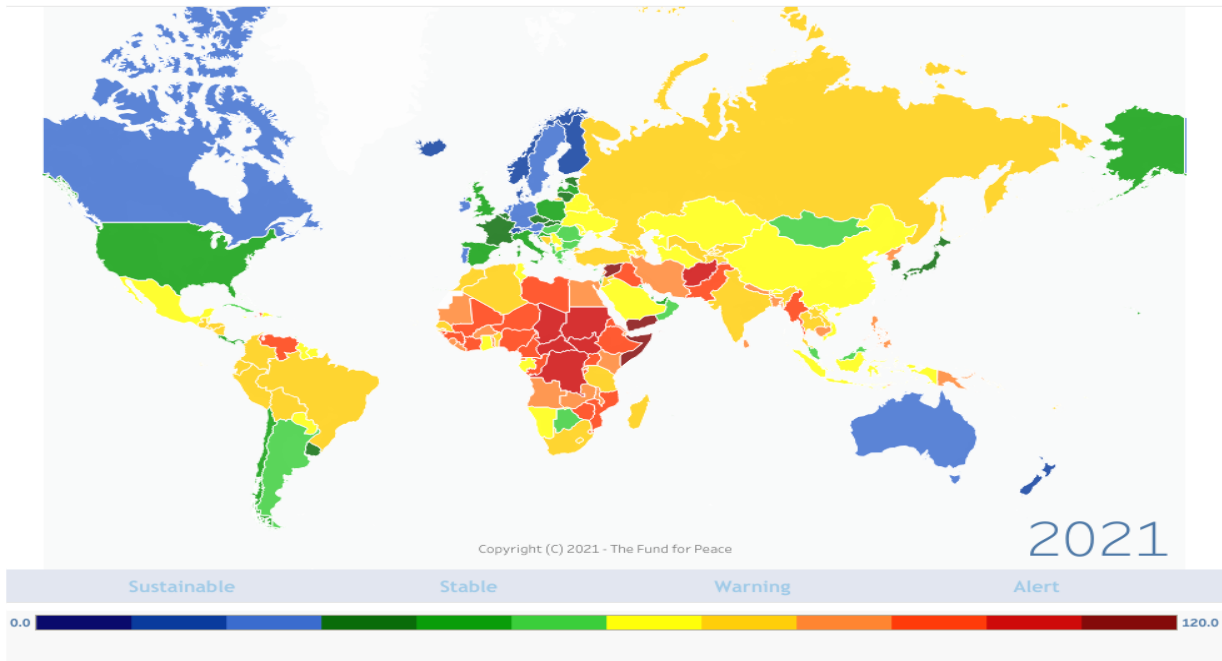
understanding of fragility has been established, OECD still reverts to the state as the primary focus.

The two figures underneath depict the states of fragility according to Fund For Peace (figure 1) and OECD (figure 2). These are the most recent publications from both organizations<sup>1</sup>. Fund For Peace (FFP) is an American non-profit and non-governmental organization, founded in 1957, with the mission to address issues of violent conflict, state fragility, and security and human rights. Their ambitions are to create early warning systems for armed conflict and violent elections (FFP, 2018). Figure 1 is a heatmap of the globe where blue indicates the least fragile states and red the most fragile states. The heatmap is an aggregate of all the different variables of FFP's fragility indicators, which include cohesion indicators (incl. security apparatus, factionalized elites, group grievance), economic indicators (incl. economic decline, uneven economic development, human flight and brain drain), political indicators (incl. state legitimacy, public services, human rights and rule of law) and social and cross-cutting indicators (demographic pressures, refugees and internally displaced peoples, external intervention) (ibid.). In Figure 2., we have an illustration on the 57 states of fragility according to OECD, with the 13 most fragile states (marked in yellow) being: Yemen, South Sudan, Somalia, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Syrian Arab Republic, Chad, Afghanistan, Haiti, Burundi, Iraq, Sudan & Congo. OECD's fragility index includes economic, environmental, political, security-related and societal indicators.

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<sup>1</sup> The recent invasion on Ukraine would likely decrease Ukraine's ranking on the index

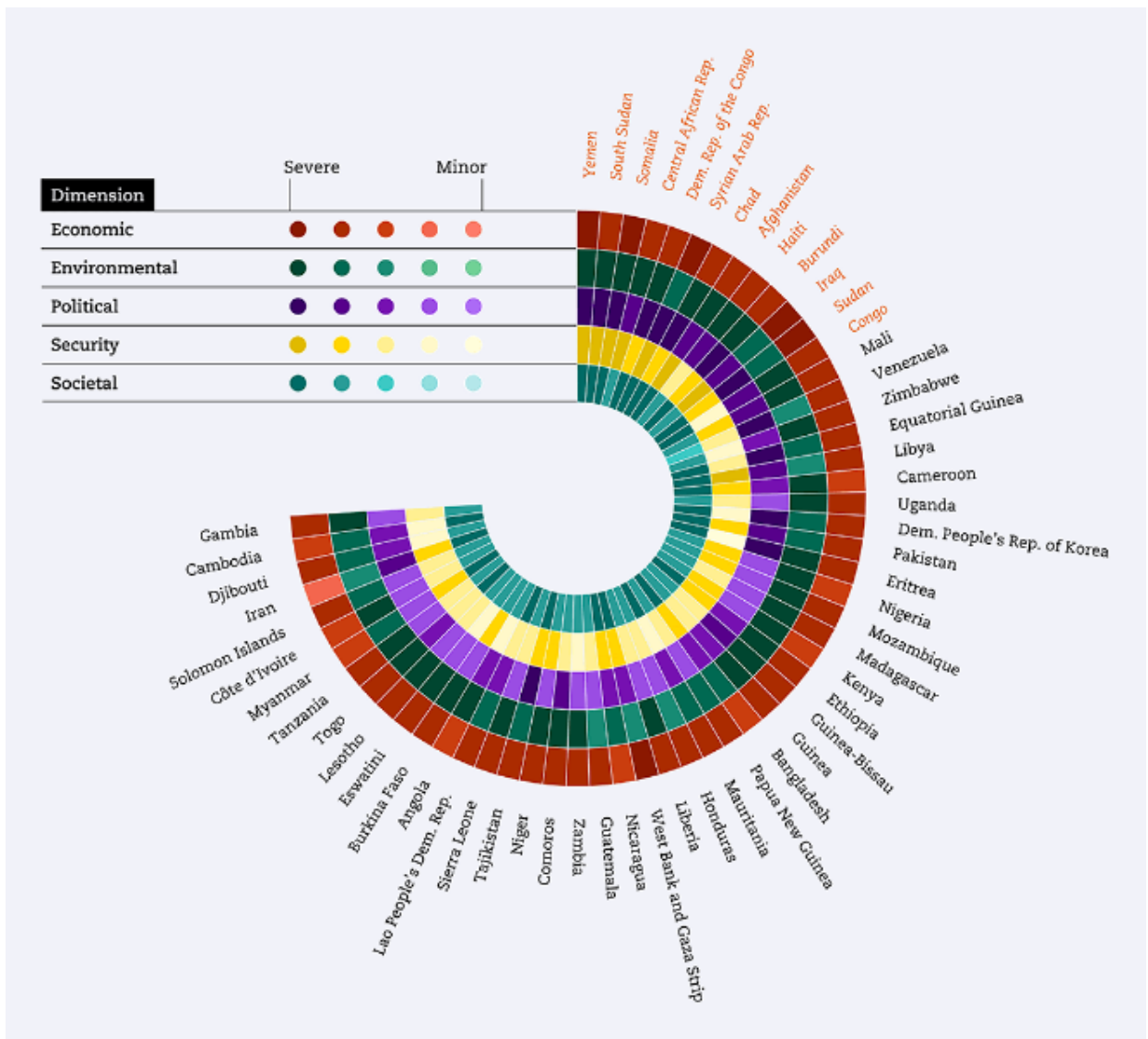
Figure 1: Fragility in the World, 2021



Most Fragile States in the world according to the Fund for Peace are situated in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Source: *Fund For Peace, 2021*

Figure 2. States of Fragility, 2020



OECD's Fragile State index considers economic, environmental, political, security related and societal indicators in determining a state's fragility.

Source: *OECD, 2020*

### **3.2.1 Drivers of fragility in fragile states**

In order to understand the ambiguity and the critique against the usage of the term ‘Fragile States’, Ware (2014) takes a cluster of countries that are all considered ‘fragile states’ by development actors (e.g. OECD, DAC, World Bank), yet the driver of fragility is distinctly different from one and other. In the next subsections we will analyze a selection of different drivers of fragility as identified by Ware (2014).

### **3.2.2 Capacity**

According to the World Bank fragility rating from 2010, seven countries in the Pacific were labeled as fragile including, Papua New Guinea, Fiji, and the Solomon Islands (Feeny & Donahue, 2014; p. 89). The main driver for fragility in these nations in contemporary times, although historically they have suffered from conflict and strife, is the lack of state capacity to mitigate risk, as well as utilizing its resources efficiently. Capacity is, as defined by OECD/DAC, “...the ability of people, organizations and society as a whole to manage their affairs successfully. Capacity development is the process whereby people, organizations and society as a whole unleash, strengthen, create, adapt and maintain capacity over time” (Baser, 2011; p. 2). Lack of capacity can be caused by multiple factors. For the Pacific Islands; large proportions of the population live in hard-to-reach areas, with few services available and thus minimal cooperation with national policy, creating a wide state-society gap. Furthermore, domestic markets are typically small, resources scarce, vulnerability to external shocks (economic and environmental) is high and distances to major markets great (ibid.). Countries where capacity is the major driver for fragility, development donors tend to opt for Programme Based Approaches, although their effectiveness have been scrutinized.

### 3.2.3 Vulnerability

Another driver for fragility that is discussed in Anothony Ware's 2014 book is vulnerability. Vulnerability as the fragility driver has been seen in countries such as in the pacific islands, but also Nepal and Malawi. These countries are considered extremely vulnerable to environmental changes such as climate change and extreme weather that further exacerbate other problems. The pacific islands, susceptible to storms may at a moments notice experience large infrastructural destruction, that in turn exacerbates vulnerability to disease, poverty, malnutrition, displacement and poor living conditions. Haiti, for instance, after the 2010 devastating earthquake had a gargantuan cholera outbreak, which was particularly difficult to manage due to the extreme infrastructural damage caused by the earthquake; furthermore, as the countries coping mechanism to the aftermath of such shocks are insufficient – these events tend to be followed by increased criminality as the people are resorting to illegal activities for survival; which in turn leads to increases in internally displaced people (ECHO, 2021). Thus vulnerability feeds into a vicious cycle that habitually undermines development efforts. Malawi on the other hand is vulnerable to droughts; in combination with an agriculture-dependent economy, droughts pose recurring challenges to the economic development of the nation (Ware, 2014; p. 313).

Vulnerability also means vulnerability to economic and other exogenous shocks. Particularly countries that are highly dependent on cash-crop production and exports (such as cocoa) are vulnerable to global price fluctuations. Ivory Coast has an agricultural sector highly dependent on small-farmer cash-crops (cocoa), however global price fluctuation on chocolate means that small-farmers face recurring and somewhat frequent food insecurity, stuck with a commodity they cannot consume, not can they sell at fair prices for extended periods of time (Zaaimi, 2019). Vulnerability to price fluctuations is arguably however caused more by bad national agricultural policy than global economic trends. Another recent example of an exogenous factor that affects fragile states more, is the Covid-19 pandemic. Research has found that fragile states vulnerability leads to

slower economic recovery caused by exogenous shocks, such as the covid pandemic (Bousquet, 2022).

### **3.2.4 Legitimacy**

State legitimacy in the context of Fragile States can mean two different things; either that the domestic state-society relationship is in turmoil, where the government structurally disempowers certain communities; or that the international community doesn't recognize the state as an independently functioning state (e.g. Afghanistan, Zimbabwe, Myanmar) (Makuwira, 2014; Bizhan, 2014; Ware, 2014). In the case of Afghanistan, and many other states that are in the 'bottom 13' in OECDs fragile state index (e.g. Yemen, Chad, South Sudan), they suffer from state illegitimacy due to persistent conflict and war, particularly as seen by the international community. The reasons for fragility in conflict situations are evident; in addition to the trauma, human suffering and losses of life, conflict situations typically entail the disintegration of state institutions. Furthermore, such as in the case of Afghanistan at the turn of the century, conflict tends to lead to isolation and sanctions from the rest of the world (Bizhan, 2014; p. 204). Thus, the citizens in such situations face dire threats from their own government as well as the abandonment of the global aid community. International cooperation in such contexts tend to take the form of military intervention, as opposed to development interventions.

Zimbabwe on the other hand, due to its divisive domestic state affairs also suffers from legitimacy issues. Zimbabwe, once having had a relatively well functioning education system, economic growth, thriving tourist sector and stable agricultural sector, has retrogressed in most of these domains (Makuwira, 2014). Under Mugabe's authoritarian rule, the Zimbabwean state failed to cater to the economic, social and political needs of its people. Furthermore, the state was responsible for extensive human rights violations (U.S. Department of State, 2015). The consequent gap in state-society relations has made development cooperation in Zimbabwe particularly difficult, as international donors question

the state's legitimacy and capability to direct the aid to appropriate stakeholders. In these cases, international aid is typically allocated to community-led and participatory approaches, channeled through non-governmental organizations (Ware, 2014; p. 315).

### **3.2.5 International Agendas**

An underlying external factor to all cases of 'fragile states' is competing international agendas, whether political, security-rated, economic, strategic or ideological (Dutta & Williamson, 2019; p.3). Whether or not an aid donor provides aid to a fragile state is dependent on the donor's self-interest or need, such as the recipient country's UN voting habits (Einarsdóttir & Gunnlaugsson, 2016; p. 351). Furthermore, geo-political and strategic interest may guide a donor's behavior over the recipient country's needs (think West Bank & Gaza Strip). In the word constraint of this thesis it is not feasible to fully analyze the role of international agendas in development aid, yet one ought to consider this element of dynamics when we progress to the analysis section of this thesis.

### **3.2.6 Development Challenges in Fragile States**

As shown in the section above, there are many drivers for fragility, and fragile contexts affecting various domains of sustainable development. Development Aid, already a complex project, is increasingly so in fragile states as Kingsbury (2014; p. 49) notes:

*“...difficult sociopolitical contexts regularly throw up challenges to the development paradigm that conspire to defeat development efforts, channel such development to those who least need it, or preclude development and development assistance altogether. Development efforts in difficult sociopolitical contexts regularly make little or no impact relative to effort and money expended“*



However, according to OECD, “fragile contexts represent 23% of the world’s population, but 75% of people living in extreme poverty globally” (2020). Therefore, Official Development Assistance is an indispensable resource for these contexts. If the global ambitions to meet SDGs are to be pursued, the global development community must continue to increase their development efforts in fragile states, i.e. difficult and complex sociopolitical conditions. As such, in 2018, 63% of all Official Development Assistance (ODA) from the DAC member countries were allocated to fragile states (Desai, 2020; p. 12); some 60.3 billion US dollars.

Figure 3: Top Ten Recipients of Gross ODA, 2018-2019 average (USD million)

1	India	\$4,042
2	Afghanistan	\$2,876
3	Bangladesh	\$2,582
4	Syrian Arab Republic	\$2,429
5	Indonesia	\$2,231
6	Jordan	\$2,210
7	Ethiopia	\$2,144
8	Iraq	\$1,931
9	Kenya	\$1,670
10	Nigeria	\$1,550

Source: OECD, 2021

However, as development efforts habitually fall short from their goals in fragile states, policy makers and development academics have begun to consider a shift from conventional development modalities to new approaches best suited for fragile contexts. The next section of the background section is dedicated to introducing ‘alternative modalities’.

### 3.3 Alternative Modalities to Aid

The literature on alternative modalities to development aid is broad and extensive, spanning across various development theories and political paradigms. Essentially, the rejection of conventional development modalities tend to come from two distinct ideas, a) conventional development modalities are inefficient, expensive, seldom reach their goals and potentially cause more harm than good (as indicated in OECDs *principles*), or b) there is a deliberate and articulated desire to reject western-hegemonic concepts of development in principle, where development projects are coloured as an extension of western neoliberal agendas and the political paradigms that it propagates (Ahmed, 2019; Dutta *et al.*, 2019, Escobar, 2011).

Alternative modalities as a response to ineffective and expensive conventional modalities, aim to circumvent, amongst others, the issues inherent to neoliberal development orthodoxy. It is argued that the role of states and global development agencies – as the primary apparatus for development – ought to be reconstructed; primarily due to their lack of contextual understanding and nuanced approaches. As the role of the state in development is questioned, it logically follows that other actors in the development process undertake the role of development such as NGOs, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), civil society, private organizations, social movements, trade unions, think tanks and research institutes amongst others (Feeny & Donahue, 2014). Close cooperation with NGOs and CSOs is perceived as more emancipatory and participatory due to their ability to create working relationships with the aid recipients and address their viewpoints, ensure their representation and include the recipients in the development process in general (*ibid.*). In this context, it is typically advocated that development projects are conducted by NGOs in conjunction with the state to build both social and political capacity and incentivize civil society involvement (Howell & Hall, 2010). Saiful Islam (2015) also argues that local initiatives and development efforts pertaining to economic livelihood, education, and social justice have potentials for alternative development modality embedded in a

framework of freedom, choice, and empowerment. Some of the more radical proponents for alternative approaches, drive for a departure from “conventional Western modes of knowing in general in order to to make room for other types of knowledge and experience” (Escobar, 2011: p. 216) and by extension a move away from global institutions that perpetuate this discourse and move towards “locally devised and locally legitimate” institutions (Leftwich, 2010: p. 109). Yet, the so-called post-developmentalists such as Escobar and Leftwich seldom propose feasible and practical solutions as to how and through which mechanisms dire poverty, hunger and insufficient healthcare ought to be remedied. Whilst I agree with certain post-development doctrines such as increased NGO, CSO cooperation and reprioritizations in aid allocation decisions, I take a more moderate perspective, arguing that ODA should not be rejected point-blank, but rather reformed. Considering the indispensable need for development aid in Fragile States specifically, alternative approaches in those contexts should take the form of increased cooperation with NGOs and CSOs as well as a reprioritization of goals; such as refocusing on building civil society capacity and well-being over building state capacity.

Thus, in the context of this thesis, alternative modalities to aid are defined in contrast to conventional modalities: alternative modalities are non-bilateral and -multilateral approaches, where the aid is typically channeled through NGOs and CSOs to involve local communities, and strengthen local capacities, political involvement and economic resilience through participatory and empowering methods. Alternative approaches are typically grass-root, bottom-up oriented and tend to drive for change at local levels (ODI, n.d.). One of such examples, Universal Basic Income, has gained significant traction as an alternative approach to development aid.

### 3.4 Universal Basic Income

*“The future of cash transfers in Africa is not about whether to do it or not, but how to design and to most efficiently target the households that most need and how to leverage the cash with supplemental services, such as healthcare and education to get most out of it”*

David Seidenfeld, Senior Vice President at American Institutes for Research

Universal Basic Income (UBI) or Unconditional Cash Transfers as it is sometimes interchangeably referred to, is essentially an alternative sociopolitical policy, where a regular financial grant is provided to recipients without means-testing or other requirements, as a way of providing social insurance and an economic safety net to citizens (Van Parjis, 2013; p. 174); a social policy, that has gathered increased support to be launched as a development policy (Lacey, 2017; Perkiö, 2014; Wignaraja, 2020; Haagh & Rohregger, 2019)

To situate Universal Basic Income into an overarching conceptual framework, the core idea of UBI is that it invokes a series of intended positive impacts. Bastagali et al. (2016; p.23) argue: that there are three distinct steps: (a) *First-order outcomes* i.e. the direct effect of receiving a cash transfer. This essentially means that the cash is utilized to buy goods and services in a broad category of items. (b) *Second-order outcomes*, or intermediate outcomes, refers primarily to behavioral changes as a consequence of the cash injection. In UBI experiments, these behavioral changes are for example creating economic enterprises, investing, pooling resources for communal investments, reduction of indebtedness, increases in school attendance, and better health. (c) *Third-order outcomes*, or final outcomes, refers to all medium- to long-term impacts. Examples include empowerment, increased political participation, better overall well-being, and stronger civil society.

The Basic Income Earth Network (BIEN) has assigned five fundamental characteristics of UBI:

1. “**Unconditional**—It is paid without a requirement to work or to demonstrate willingness-to-work
2. **Periodic**—It is paid at regular intervals (for example every month), not as a one-off grant.
3. **Cash payment**—It is paid in an appropriate medium of exchange, allowing those who receive it to decide what they spend it on. It is not, therefore, paid either in kind (such as food or services) or in vouchers dedicated to a specific use.
4. **Individual**—It is paid on an individual basis—and not, for instance, to households.
5. **Universal**—It is paid to all, without means test.”

Source: BIEN (n.d.) *About Basic Income*

The idea might sound novel, but in fact Universal Basic Income has its conceptual roots in the works of Thomas More (*Utopia, 1516*), Thomas Paine (*Agrarian Justice, 1797*) and John Stuart Mill (*Principles of Political Economy, 1848*) amongst myriad philosophers, politicians, economists, and social scientists throughout the last five or so centuries. Historically, Universal Basic Income has had many forms, and gone through many iterations to become as it is known today. UBI’s “cousins” are welfare schemes such as negative income tax, basic endowment, earned income tax credit (i.e. refundable tax) and wage subsidies (Van Parijs & Vanderborght, 2017; p. 29-47). Whilst these schemes are best described as ‘quasi-universal basic income’, they do build on similar principles of social justice, welfare and freedom, which will be discussed later on in more detail.

Returning to the more *modern* conceptualization of Universal Basic Income, as defined above with its five distinct characteristics, it pays dividends to dissect each characteristic to ensure a tangible, concrete and transparent operationalisation of the term – however, one should note that even today there are

contending conceptualisation of UBI and in the method of its implementation (Lacey, 2017; p. 94).

Firstly, UBI is *unconditional*, which distinguishes UBI from any other welfare program (Standing, 2020). In other words, there are *no spending conditions nor means-testing*. As there is no means-testing, the recipient is not required to provide arbitrary documentation that they fall into a certain income bracket, cutting costs of expensive welfare programs with extensive bureaucracy (Standing, 2017; p. 13; Lee, 2021). Furthermore, this unconditionality manifests emancipation and empowerment as the grant can be utilized in any manner deemed necessary, whether it is used for purchasing food, medicines, clothes, educational materials or utilized for home improvements (Jahn, 2016; p. 923). Additionally it reduces the paternalistic nature of many welfare schemes and is more respectful for the dignity of the recipient; by not having conditionalities, UBI projects do not perpetuate a set of expectations and normalisations of certain issues, such as gender norms. In contrast for example, in the Zambian Child Grant Programme where households with children under the age of five receive an unconditional grant, the grant is transferred to the primary female caregiver (Peterman & Natali, 2016), has shown to have little effect on gender norms (Bonilla *et al.*, 2017).

Secondly, it is *universal and paid individually*, meaning that the grant is provided to every citizen or resident (depending on its implementation); man, woman and child, without having to prove eligibility. In an International Monetary Fund working paper with India as a case study, their findings indicate that the targeting and coverage of a UBI program would be more extensive than existing income support programs (Coady & Pardy, 2018; p.15). In conjunction with the element of unconditionality, the conceptualized strength of universality is cutting costs of bureaucracy, ensuring the right people (all people) are targeted, and circumvent structural oppression and oppression of marginalized people (Bastagali *et al.*, 2016; p. 213). Furthermore, universality is theorized to incentivise community-wide development “[Universality]...will enable detection of community effects, including non-economic effects, that paying isolated

individuals will not” (Standing, 2021; p. 81). Others also note that UBI is redistributive, “as it ensures that no member of society will fall into poverty” (Riedl, 2020; p. 3). The notion of universality in this context emerges from the theoretical framework from which UBI stems from, i.e. social justice and economic freedom and a rights-based approach, which prerequisites non-discrimination. In the same vein, the grant is paid to individuals, not household, to attempt to bypass household dynamics, particularly to empower women who frequently are sidelined from the labor market, and contribute to the significant proportion of unpaid labor (Williams, 2021; p. 2; Lombardozzi, 2020; p. 321; Bastagali *et al.*, 2016; p. 10).

Third, the grant is paid *periodically*, not as a lump sum. The reasoning behind the periodic payment, such a monthly payment, is to establish a reliable and predictable economic safety net. Standing (2015; p. 198) argues: “To appreciate fully the emancipatory value of a basic income, the concept of economic security needs to be unbundled. Its inverse, insecurity, arises from the combination of risk, hazards, shocks and uncertainty”. By ensuring an economic safety net, some of the effects of uncertainty and risk can be mitigated or eliminated. Full freedom, he argues, requires economic security, such that the recipients can make choices without the fear of economic destitution (ibid. p; 221). The periodic payment has shown to reduce indebtedness (Davala *et al.*, 2015), tendency to loan, and the results consistently showed the lifting of “saving and credit constraints, enabling investment” (Bastagali *et al.*, 2016; p. 151).

Lastly, the recipient of UBI receives the grant in *cash*, not in food stamps, or other vouchers, meaning that the recipient can utilize the cash in any desired manner. This is argued to be more respectful for the dignity of the recipient, and certainly a less paternalistic scheme (Van Parijs & Vanderborght, 2017; p. 67). Guy Standing frequently argues that the emancipatory value exceeds the monetary value of UBI; by this he means that by providing cash, the recipient finds more uses to it, as opposed to the same monetary value of e.g. food stamps. His argument builds on multiple observations from UBI experiments, having noted that it reduces instances of debt and tendency to loan, increases ability to buy

high-return goods such as fertilizers or machinery, provides a type insurance, decreases dependency risks and as argued before, allows the recipient to utilize it for instance for home improvements or building latrines, which has uncountable positive health effects (Standing, 2015).

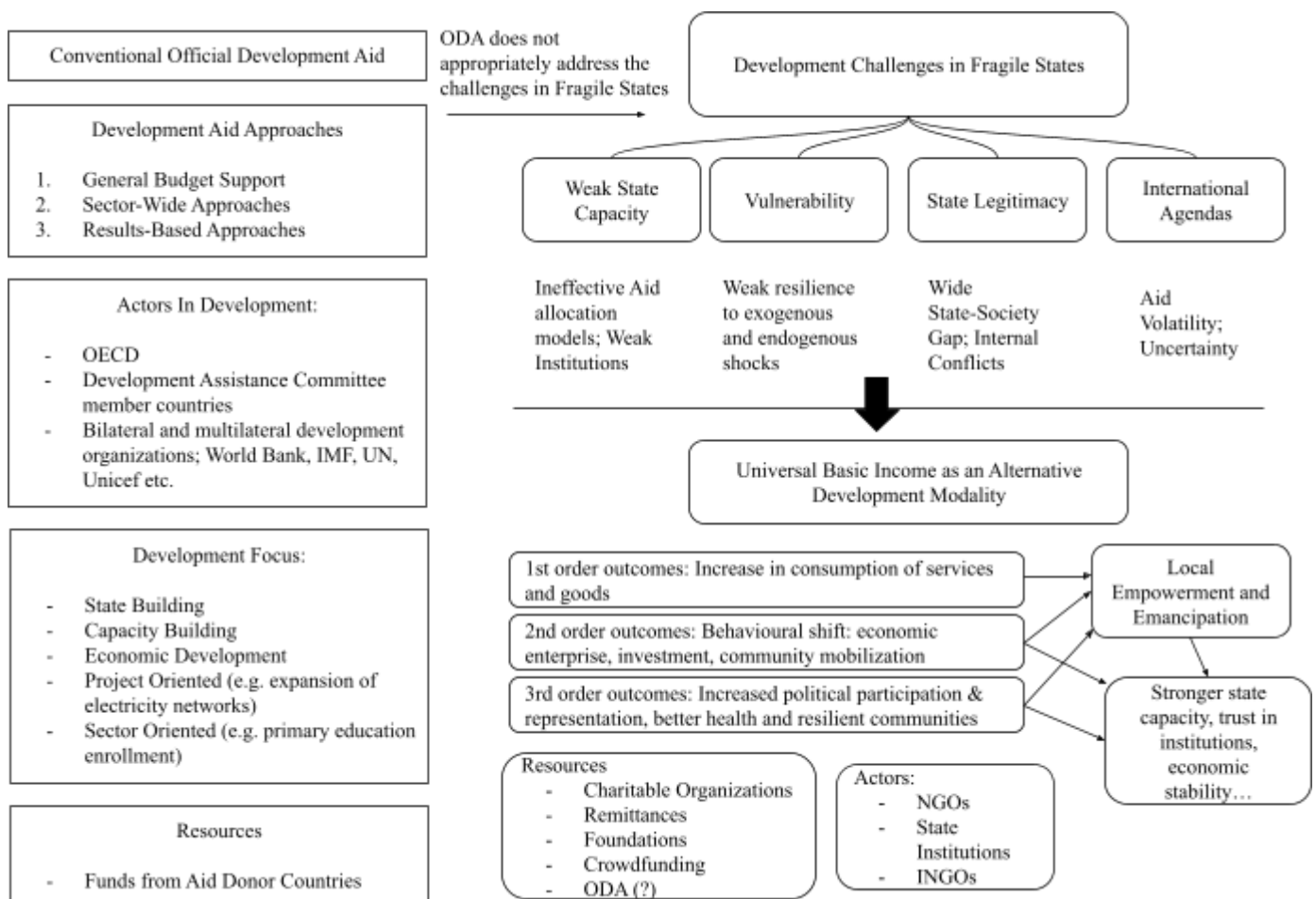
Taking into consideration the element of unconditionality in addition to the four other characteristics of Universal Basic Income, the transformative powers of an UBI begin to become evident; it is an idea that combines equality and freedom as ultimate goals (van Parjis, 1997). Informed by the conceptualized strengths of UBI, in recent years, policy-makers, academics, politicians and social-scientists tackling the gargantuan issue of increasing inequality and dire poverty, have revamped and reinvigorated the discourse, research and implementation of UBI as a serious alternative to conventional development practices. However, UBI is still today regarded by many as a radical, utopian or simply as an unfeasible development policy. To test the potentials and feasibility of UBI regardless of this critique, UBI experiments have been conducted around the globe since the 1970's by various governments, municipalities, NGOs and international agencies. It is important to reiterate that they are indeed only experiments; currently there exists no completely implemented UBI programmes. The experiments, whilst informative, cannot be considered as *Universal Basic Income* by definition, as they typically were provided to only selected peoples in an area, for a predetermined period of time.

Having said that, the number of UBI experiments are manyfold and they have been conducted in varying socio-political contexts, different economic circumstances, and the method of implementation is broad – providing researchers with ample data to measure the impact, strengths, limitations and feasibility to implement UBI in broader contexts (Hasdell, 2020). Experiments have been conducted, amongst others in Kenya, Alaska, Finland, India, Spain, Netherlands, Namibia (Samuel, 2020). Furthermore, the number of variables measured in these experiments are extensive, including but not limited to: poverty and expenditures (Gentilini *et al.*, 2020), savings and investment (Bastagali *et al.*, 2016), labor and employment (Pega *et al.*, 2017), women's empowerment (Davala *et al.*, 2015;



Bastagali *et al.*, 2016), education (Marinescou, 2018; Davala *et al.*, 2015), and health and healthcare access (Owusu-addo *et al.*, 2018). These experiments, and the research conducted on previous experiments, constitute for a large bulk of data utilized in this thesis, which will examine the feasibility of UBI in fragile states.

Returning to the critique of conventional aid modalities, UBI seems to circumvent many of the issues associated with conventional development aid, and possess the qualities that are desired in an alternative modality to aid. The chart underneath is aimed to facilitate the reader to situate UBI as a development modality in the broader research context of this thesis.



## 4. Descriptive Analysis: UBI Experiments

As explained in the methodology section of this thesis, the aim is to inductively discover what preconditions must be in place for an UBI project to be implemented in a Fragile State and moreover what were the challenges. The approach to discover these aspects is to examine UBI projects of the past and explore what similarities are seen across the different contexts. Whilst the approach on surface level appears similar to a case study research, there is a difference between using disciplined *case study research design*, and using *cases* to engage in discussion about a challenge in a real-life context (Ellinger & McWhorter, 2016). In this thesis, the latter approach is used and thus the methodology of this thesis is a grounded theory approach, where the data utilized in the analysis is *derived* from the UBI cases. For the sake of clarity, the term ‘case’ in the context of this thesis is used interchangeably with UBI ‘projects’, ‘examples’ and ‘experiments’ in the following sections.

In the next sections I will provide a general account and background understanding of UBI projects conducted in fragile contexts. The description of the projects is aimed to facilitate the reader to comprehend the analysis section, as the analysis draws from ‘lessons learned’ from previous UBI experiments.

### 4.1. Kenya - ‘GiveDirectly’

#### *Development Context*

The Non-profit organization called GiveDirectly is currently conducting the world's largest and longest-running Universal Basic Income experiment. It was launched in 2016 and it is scheduled to continue until 2028 (GiveDirectly, n.d.). Although GiveDirectly’s interests and charitable work goes well beyond its focus on UBI (since 2009 they have delivered more than \$500m to over one million families across Kenya, Rwanda, Liberia, Malawi, Morocco, Mozambique, DRC,

Uganda, and the United States) in the context of this thesis I will focus more on their work pertaining to the UBI experiment specifically.

The UBI experiment villages are scattered across the Kisumu, Siaya and Bomet counties in Kenya. The UBI experiment enclaves 195 villages, and more than 20.000 individuals (GiveDirectly, n.d.). Collectively in these counties, some 630 000 people live under the poverty line, living on less than \$15/month, meaning that poverty is both chronic and broadly spread. Most people live in thatched roof homes and have poor access to healthcare. According to a 2013 Report, the main development missions of the counties prior to the launch of the UBI experiment were primarily driven by the endeavor to mitigate inequality (KNBS & SID, 2013). The report indicates a shift in viewing inequality as merely a monetary issue, but rather an issue that include “important livelihood parameters like employment, education, energy, housing, water and sanitation to show the levels of vulnerability and patterns of unequal access to essential social services” (ibid; p. iv). In many of the variables mentioned above, the Bomet and Siaya counties score particularly poorly. As such, GiveDirectly decided to focus on these areas.

The aim of GiveDirectly’s programme is both to help the recipients out of dire poverty, but also to attain meaningful data about the effects of the UBI. In order to achieve more reliable data-sets for their analysis and to test different hypotheses of the efficacy of UBI, the grant recipients are divided into three groups.

GiveDirectly has divided the recipients into the following:

**“Long-term basic income:** 44 villages (4,966 people) with recipients receiving roughly \$0.75 per adult per day, delivered monthly for 12 years.

**Short-term basic income:** 80 villages (7,333 people) with recipients receiving the same monthly amount, but only for 2 years.

**Lump Sum:** 71 villages (8,548 people) with recipients receiving the same amount as the short-term basic income group (in net present value), but all up front as a “lump sum.”

**Control group:** 100 villages not receiving cash transfers.”

Source: *GiveDirectly (n.d.)*

The grant equals approximately 25%-50% of the average income of a two-adult household in the area (Bastagali *et al.*, 2016; p. 240). GiveDirectly stresses the importance of respecting the self-determination of the grant recipients in their work, which reflects a thorough commitment to ‘pure’ UBI. GiveDirectly states:

*“We do not impose our preferences, or judgments, on the beneficiaries; instead we respect and empower them to make their own choices, elevating their voices in the global aid debate. This value is core to GiveDirectly’s identity as the first organization exclusively devoted to putting the poor in control of how aid money is spent. It comes at a potential cost, as it means that neither we nor donors get to set priorities”* (Values | GiveDirectly, n.d.).

### *Transfer*

How is the grant provided to the recipients? First, GiveDirectly aims to target those *villages* where poverty appears more dire. They work with partner organizations such as other NGOs, community-based organizations as well as with governments and national surveys to identify villages that would benefit from the grants the most. Their approach also includes surveying villages, and selecting those that have thatched roofs as opposed to metal roofs (FAQ | GiveDirectly, n.d.) All in all, GiveDirectly “...considers poverty data, population density, logistical

and security factors, and the presence of other poverty-focused NGOs when it selects a district or county to work in” (GiveWell, 2018).

Once the selection of villages is completed, GiveDirectly conducts a census of the village and simultaneously enrolls all the *households* in the village; whether or not a household wants to receive the grant, is for the recipients to decide (There have been cases where villages refused to participate for various reasons, see Schmidt, 2022). Prior to the launch of the transfer, GiveDirectly obtains permits from local authorities and holds a village introduction meeting with village residents and other stakeholders (GiveWell, 2018). Finally, for the actual transfer, the *individual recipient* needs to have a SIM card and a mobile phone in order to gain access to the grant. The grant is paid to men and women to separate accounts. GiveDirectly provides the SIM cards, and typically also sells a mobile phone to the recipient at bulk prices: the price of the mobile phone is then deducted from the first transfer (ibid.). In order to ensure that all recipients who are eligible and willing to participate are enrolled, GiveDirectly conducts visits in the field to all households to inform them of the project. Furthermore, in an effort to prevent fraud and to ensure the notion of ‘universality’ of their project, field staff make multiple phone calls and, for vulnerable recipients, in-person visits, to all recipients as transfers are being sent.

In the Kenyan case, the transfer is sent through electronic payment services called M-Pesa. M-Pesa is a mobile phone-based money transfer service, and the largest mobile network operator in Kenya. Once the grant is sent, the recipient receives a text message; the electronic money can then be withdrawn as cash from M-Pesa’s agents, which includes shopkeepers, petrol stations, supermarkets, cyber cafes, couriers, and banks. Many local shops also accept an electronic transfer of money as a form of payment (ibid.).

### *Funding*

Although GiveDirectly has grown to a charity organization with cash transfers exceeding half a billion dollars, the budget for the UBI experiment in

question is around \$30 million (Faye & Niehaus, 2016; McFarland, 2017). GiveDirectly receives its funding from a number of different sources: from individual donors, companies (e.g. Blue Meridian, NBA cares), foundations (e.g. Good Ventures, Global Innovation Fund, Google.org), non-profits (e.g. GiveWell, The Life you Can Save), and notably, development institutions (e.g. USAID).

As the organization is dependent on donations from third parties, GiveDirectly has acknowledged the self-interest in maintaining a high level of transparency and accountability pertaining to its use of funds. Particularly the collaboration with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), an American government agency, requires thorough reporting on how and why the money is being spent. The organizations Financial Statements are easily and publicly accessible on their website.

GiveDirectly has found a well-functioning business model, with a high level of efficiency, both in terms of fundraising and the delivery of cash transfers themselves. Pertaining to fundraising, for every dollar raised, GiveDirectly spent roughly \$0.01 in 2020 (Financials | GiveDirectly, 2021). Pertaining to the cash grants, the latest figures for the 12 month rolling sum comes up to \$211.45M in cash transfers and the cost of delivery comes up to \$12.95M, meaning that more than 0.9\$ for every dollar spent goes to the recipient (ibid.). It ought to be noted that these figures are for the organization as a whole, rather than strictly pertaining to the UBI experiment alone.

## **4.2. Uganda - 'EIGHT'**

### *Development Context*

“EIGHT”, is a non-profit organization that has been running Universal Basic Income experiments in four different rural Ugandan villages – Busibi, Kyataruga, Katugo and Kigombe – since 2017. Unlike GiveDirectly, the length of their programmes are significantly shorter lasting only for two years. Currently,

Busibi (2017-2019) and Kyataruga (2019-2021) are completed experiments, whilst the experiment is still ongoing for the other two villages. The villages in question have between 150-300 inhabitants, most of which live in dire poverty, are highly vulnerable to economic and environmental shocks, and have low opportunity for improving capacities and capabilities. All of the four selected villages are characterized by poor housing (mud walls and grass thatched roofs), low school enrollments (50% prior to the launch of the UBI), low entrepreneurship, and little involvement in community groups (Grisolia *et al.*, 2021; EIGHT, n.d.)

Similarly to GiveDirectly, the ultimate aim of their experiment was to reduce extreme poverty whilst attaining insightful data about the potentials of UBI as a development policy. Additionally, the UBI project in Busibi was the topic of a documentary titled “Crazy Money” (2020), in which a film crew followed the lives of a number of UBI recipients during and after the project, portraying the lived realities of an UBI recipient. EIGHT, in conjunction with their research partner, the Institute of Development Policy of the University of Antwerp, as well as anthropologists from Ghent University, has placed its attention into measuring the effects of UBI in various social domains; on expenditures (how is the money spent), on savings, entrepreneurship, education, collective enterprise, health and well-being, life satisfaction, and resilience (Grisolia *et al.*, 2021). Furthermore, they have adopted a gendered perspective, where the effects of UBI are measured in relation to one’s gender, which indicates that EIGHT perceived gender inequality both as an urgent problem as well as something that UBI can affect for the better.

### *Transfer*

The Ugandan UBI experiment is significantly smaller than the Kenyan one; which made targeting a much easier task. For example in the first village, Busibi, every single person was enrolled and was eligible for receiving the grant. The village had 58 adults, and 88 children. For adults, the grant is equal to

16€/month and for children the grant, which is paid to their mother, is 8€/month (Grisolia *et al.*, 2021). This mounts up to approximately 30% of an average low-income household's monthly wage (Gentilini *et al.*, 2020). However, there were a few individuals who initially rejected the grant, arguing that “those who introduced the project brought along witchcraft... within five years people will drop dead” (Crazy Money, 2020, 20:26-21:20). However, within a year, every member of the village was enrolled, as there appeared to be no adverse effects for accepting the grant. In the documentary ‘Crazy Money’, a notable point of criticism of their UBI programme was shown, namely, that the project in the village of Busibi caused significant jealousy and feelings of inequality in the neighboring villages.

Similarly to GiveDirectly, EIGHT has found mobile money, i.e. a mobile-phone based money transfer, to be the most efficient and safe way of transferring the grant to individuals. EIGHT not only provides the recipients with a mobile phone, they also cover phone subscriptions and the bank charges (Eight.world, n.d.). Uganda was one of the first countries in Africa to introduce mobile banking and has a comprehensive network of ‘mobile money agents’ over whom basic banking functions can be conveyed (Lancaster, 2019). However, not everyone in the village (Busibi) was familiar with mobile phones, nor mobile banking. In the documentary “Crazy Money”, a community member is shown teaching others how to turn on and use the mobile phone, check account information, and how to withdraw the money (16:00-18:04). The withdrawal of cash is done by meeting a ‘mobile money agent’, who provides the cash once a transfer is made on the mobile phone. In the documentary, this transaction takes place in a hut, with only one employee on site.

### *Funding*

According to the co-founder of EIGHT, Steven Janssens, Uganda was selected as the country for the experiment partly because it was considered a cheap country to run such an experiment in and partly as the founder had personal



connections to the country. As EIGHT is a very small non-profit organization, “... doing a pilot of this type in the west would simply be unaffordable for a small crowd-funded charity” (Janssens, 2018). The cash transfers in the pilot project in Busibi alone were approximately 50.000€ (Crazy Money, 2020). EIGHT has a similar way of gathering funds from individuals as GiveDirectly, i.e. direct donations to the organization. They also aim to reserve 90% of the donation for the recipients, and the remaining 10% is utilized for costs of delivery, fundraising and other administrative costs (Eight, n.d.). For this thesis, further information about their funding practices was not available.

### **4.3. Namibia - ‘BIG’**

#### *Development Context*

The Namibian UBI experiment emerged from a proposal made in 2002 by the Namibian Tax Consortium, who were asked to review the current tax system in Namibia. Their proposal concluded with a recommendation to pilot an UBI experiment, to measure the impact of UBI on economic empowerment and redistribution of wealth, in order to tackle the issue of income inequality in the country (Haarmann & Haarmann, 2005; p. 13); Namibia has the second highest income distribution inequality in the world (World Bank, 2015). Consequently, in 2004 the ‘BIG’ (Basic Income Grant) coalition was formed to organize and implement the UBI pilot project. The BIG coalition is led by a number of civil society organizations, who took up the challenge of implementing the pilot project, driven by the shared interest of reducing poverty and redistributing wealth. The organization responsible for the coalition is the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Republic of Namibia, which collaborates closely with a number of Civil Society Organizations and private organizations: Council of Churches, the National Union of Namibian Workers, the umbrella body of the NGOs (NANGOF), the umbrella body of the AIDS organizations (NANASO), the

National Youth Service, the Church Alliance for Orphans, the Legal Assistance Centre, and the Labour Resource and Research Institute.

The UBI project was launched in January 2008 and it lasted for 24 months. According to BIG, a number of villages were considered for the pilot project, and finally Otjivero-Omitara was selected for its manageable size, accessibility, and poverty situation (Haarmann *et al.*, 2009). According to interviews conducted in Otjivero-Omitara prior to the launch of the UBI project, the area had challenges with chronic hunger, unemployment, poverty, low school enrollment, poor living conditions, high rates of untreated HIV, and self-reported hopelessness and despair (*ibid.*).

### *Transfer & Targeting*

The Otjivero-Omitara village has a modest population of only some 900 individuals (Gentilini, 2020), but the initial registration of the grant recipient was a large undertaking. All members of each household were registered during only one day (31st of July, 2007) in order to avoid in-migration to the area. Anyone in-migrating to the area was not eligible for the project after the 31st (Haarmann *et al.*, 2009).

The BIG grant was paid for all individuals in the Otjivero-Omitara village, women, men and children under the age of 60. According to BIG, their decision to exclude over 60-year-old is based on the reasoning that “the Namibian old-age pension is a universal grant for all men and women over the age of sixty, and that the take-up of that is nearly 100%, the BIG should be paid to all those men, women and children under the age of 60” (Haarmann *et al.*, 2009). The size of the grant was N\$100/month (~US\$12); and the grant for children and youths under the age of 21 was paid to the primary care-giver (Gentilini, 2020).

For the initial 6 months, BIG’s method for the practical transferral of the grant followed the method utilized by Namibia's old age pension payment system. In essence, the grant recipients procured a ‘smart card’, that contains an ID number, name and a photograph, as well as a microchip that contained fingerprint

data, date of birth and withdrawal history. The company responsible for the out-payment, United Africa, drove vehicles to designated pay-out locations that had fitted cash dispensers (with armed guards), where the recipients could withdraw the grant using the 'smart card' (Haarmann *et al.*, 2009). Utilizing this method was initially practical due to the fact that this was a pre-existing payment system with broad networks as it was used by the old-age pensions system. However, the coalition was dismayed by the potentially stigmatizing queuing in order to receive the grant, and by the lack of freedom for the recipient to self decide when and how much of the grant to withdraw (*ibid.*). Consequently, after 6 months, the payment method changed and was taken over by the Namibian Post Office via its Post Office smart card savings account system, that moved all the smart card holders to the formal banking system and allowed the recipients to self choose when, where and how much of the grant to withdraw.

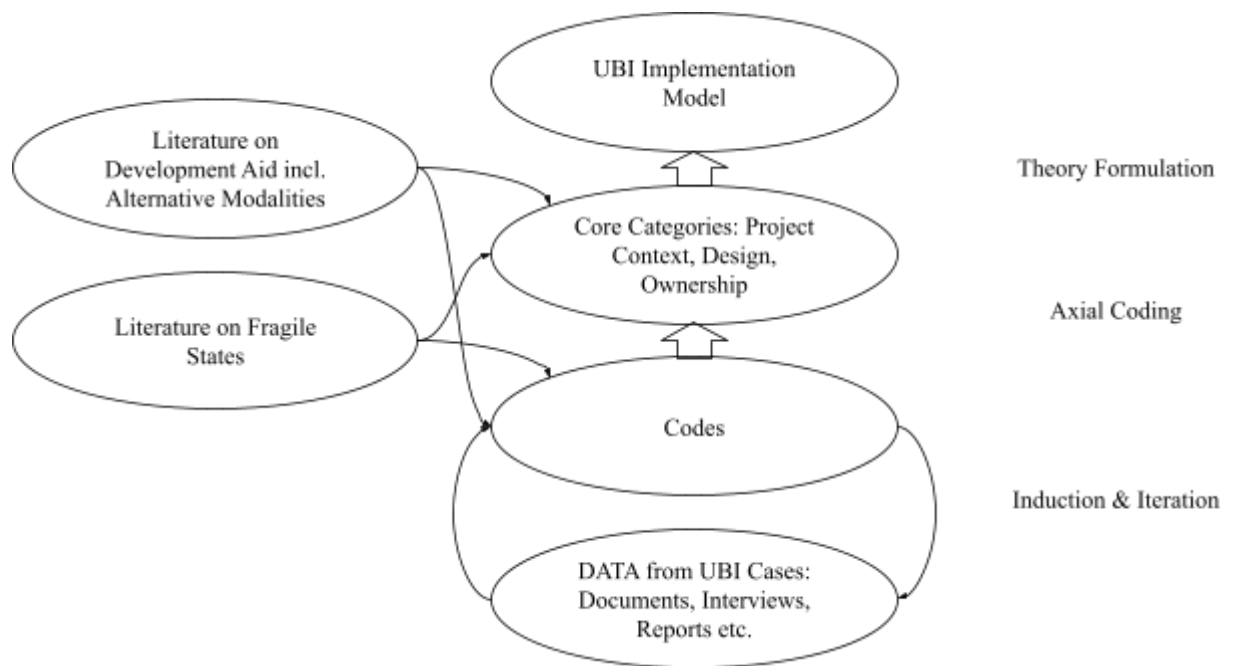
### *Funding*

Despite the fact that the recommendation to conduct a pilot project experimenting with UBI came from the Namibian Tax Authority, the government authorities did not contribute to the funding of the project. Thus the coalition undertook a fundraising campaign in August 2007, and it had secured enough funds to run the project for 2 years by January 2008. The multi-stakeholder coalition was dependent on their many connections and partners for funding and support of the pilot project. Funds to start the pilot project were raised through contributions from supporters of the idea from various sections of Namibia's society such as the prime minister, and by support from people, churches, organizations and donors in other countries (Haarmann *et al.*, 2009). Most of the funds however were provided by the United German Evangelical Mission (Van Parijs, & Vanderborght, 2017). The cost of the project amounted to N\$3.000.000 in total; for each N\$100 that was paid out, administrative costs came to N\$4. Out of the three million, only 2.5m were used for the project (grant + administrative costs). The additional N\$0.5m were used to cover the research costs (fieldwork,

training of enumerators, data recording, data analysis, printing and publication of the reports etc.) (Haarmann et al., 2011).

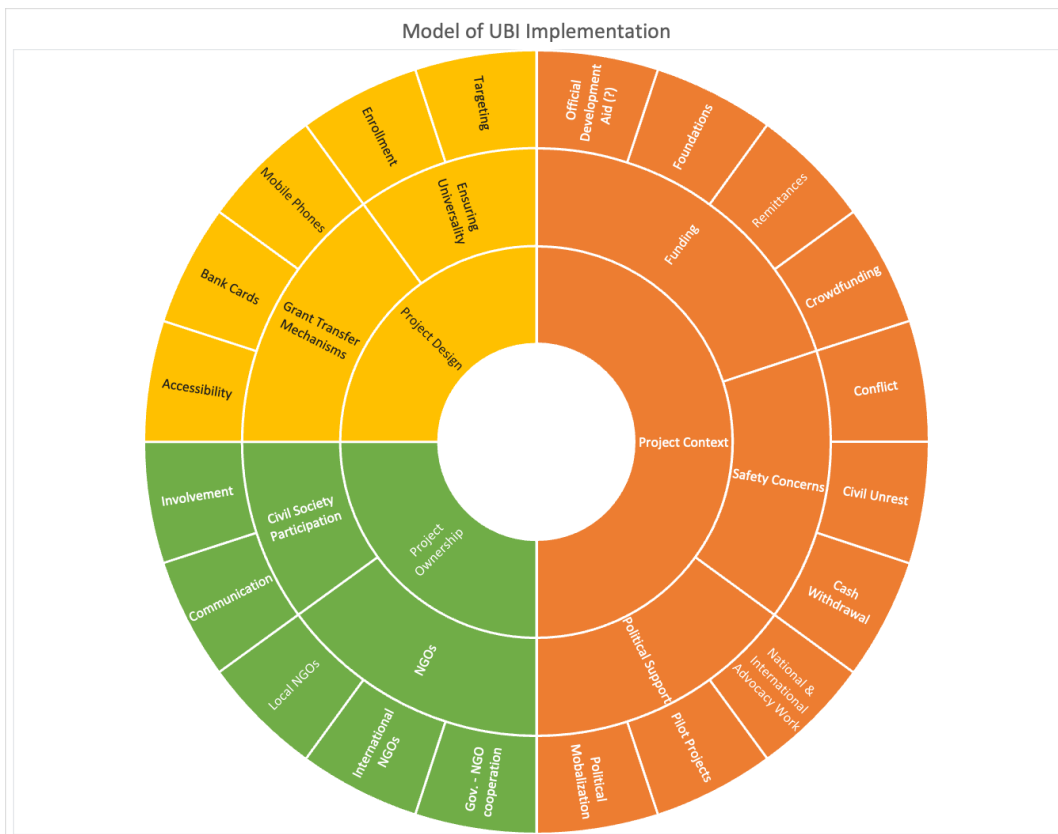
## **5. Challenges and provisional Solutions for UBI Implementation**

To respond to the research question, we can draw inductively from the UBI examples described above. According to the grounded theory approach, analysis and data compiling occur concurrently. Thus whilst researching the different examples of UBI implementation, and further coding it into recurring themes, the following conditions were seen occurring in the various contexts. The codes were constantly compared against one another and refined, until three core categories emerged to form the basis of the theory. Theory, in the context of this paper, is a mechanism for understanding the world, presented to the reader in the form of a Model (see below). Furthermore, the literature pertaining to fragile states further framed the analysis; as I was discovering the challenges present in the UBI cases, I simultaneously related back to other so-called Fragile States, inductively synthesizing how certain challenges might translate to other contexts. In other words, the findings derived from the cases were considered in relation to other factors discovered conducting the review on Fragile States and development challenges in such conditions. Underneath is a visual representation of the analytical framework.



Thus, having conducted the research and analysis for this thesis, I have compiled the following model to explain the challenges in implementing UBI programmes in Fragile States. The three core categories that emerged from the coding are as follows:

1. Project Context
2. Project Design
3. Project Ownership



The analysis underneath provides a provisional model of the challenges and methods to address the challenges in the implementation and the upholding of Universal Basic Income projects. The analysis is aimed to provide the reader with the means to conceptualize the research problem that this thesis aims to address.

## 5.1 Project Context

During the process of theoretical sampling, data collection, analysis, and coding, there were a number of themes that may be categorized as ‘macro-level pre-conditions’ or as ‘project context’. The pre-conditions refer primarily to exogenous challenges that posed hurdles prior to the implementation of UBI cases, whether it be political support (or lack thereof), security, or funding challenges.

### 5.1.1 Attaining political backing

*“Engaging this challenge [implementing UBI] productively requires political will, long-term planning, effective political communication, and making human development an overall goal and a public priority guiding fiscal reforms”*

–Haagh & Roghregger, 2019, World Health Organization

Amassing political support is arguably the first step in the implementation of most development policies; which, for UBI advocates, appears to be repeatedly challenging regardless of the context, even though UBI experiments and pilot projects repeatedly show promising results (see, Bastagali *et al.*, 2016; Hasdell, 2020, Gentilini, 2020). It is not possible to condense all of the reasons why there would be political hesitation to undertake an UBI project, but in the cases analyzed in the scope of this paper, the cost of the projects seem to be the primary reasons for political opposition.

In the Namibian example, the launch of the UBI took six years, partly due to fundraising activities, but primarily due to initial lack of political support. The initial recommendation for experimenting with UBI by the government body NamTax was already published in 2002, whilst the pilot project was only rolled out in 2008. For the first three years of the existence of the BIG Coalition, their main focus was to engage with politicians to amass support for the Universal Basic Income programme (Haarmann, 2008). Whilst the theoretical strengths of an UBI appeared convincing, the Namibian government was divided despite the fact that many members of parliament were in favor of it; in particular the Ministry of Finance doubted the project, as the International Monetary Fund and World bank advised against such a policy, arguing that the grant would cause macroeconomic instability and become too costly (Jauch, 2015; Isaacs, 2006; Strauss, 2006; Mueller *et al.*, 2006). The BIG Coalition thus took up the financing of the project themselves frustrated by the inactivity of government bodies, and named their UBI experiment deliberately a *pilot project* – indicating that the purpose of the

experiment was to showcase both the positive impact such a project can have, and its practical feasibility for a nation-wide policy. However, despite promising results of the experiment, a nation-wide roll-out of the project was not launched by the government. As seen in the Namibian case, the state hesitated to act due to pressures from the World Bank and IMF, showing that unless there is political support, not only from national authorities but from global development actors, launching a UBI project may not be feasible. Thus international interest and agendas might affect the future implementation of UBI projects, as shown in Anthony Ware's book on Fragile States (2014).

Conversely, In the Kenyan example, both local District Commissioners and the Governor's office appeared to be very pleased by GiveDirectly running its experiment in their region, having signed and approved written agreements prior to the launch (GiveWell, 2018). Furthermore, GiveDirectly obtained permission from local chiefs and village elders prior to launch (GiveDirectly, 2012). The COO of GiveDirectly, Piali Mukhopadhyay has said in a conversation; "By now, GiveDirectly understands well the process for seeking government approvals in Kenya and does not see acquiring approvals as a major risk ... GiveDirectly just received permission to work in Ukwala district in Kenya. The whole approvals process took 2 weeks" (GiveWell, 2014). This would indicate that whilst UBI may not be in the national agenda, regions may still amass support for the launch of UBI locally.

An interesting observation when researching political feasibility of UBI comes from a qualitative study by Dolan (2020), where she interviewed UBI recipients in Kenya. Her research shows that "foreign aid does not appear to undermine the government's legitimacy in the mind of its citizens" (p. 157). This is explained partly because the assumption that accepting foreign aid decreases legitimacy is ill-grounded, and partly because according to her interviews, citizens in the area expect the government to receive foreign assistance, thus the government is perceived to be 'doing its job'. As such, her findings suggest that pilot projects are generally welcomed by civil society, and might create momentum for political change in the long run. Similarly in the Namibian case,



years after the UBI experiment, in a survey conducted by the Institute for Public Policy Research, 78% of the interviewees supported the launch of nation-wide UBI regardless if it would increase taxation (Lindeke, 2014).

Possible solutions for political challenges, as seen in the cases, is the mobilization of stakeholders (BIG Namibia) or implementation of pilot projects to amass support. International UBI advocacy work can also effectively incentivize future UBI experiments. However, evidenced by the scattered UBI experiment, all of which are at regional level would indicate that future UBI experiments are more likely to occur not on national level, but on a smaller scale in Fragile States.

### **5.1.2 Funding Challenges**

A central dimension of the UBI debate is how to fund it. Although these preconditions or prerequisites in this analysis chapter are not ranked in order of importance, having monetary resources is perhaps the most vital element to secure prior to launching UBI in fragile contexts. In the UBI examples above, we have a few different methods for how to fund an UBI project. In the Kenyan example, the fundraising has evidently been most efficient out of the three examples. They received their multimillion dollar funding through large foundations and private organizations, and through a few philanthropic individuals. Furthermore, their method for raising funds has been efficient, minimizing the costs of fundraising and maximizing the amount that can be transferred to the recipient. The other two projects had much smaller budgets; the Ugandan project was funded through crowdfunding and the Namibian one was largely funded by churches and religious organizations. From a post-developmental perspective, gathering financial resources domestically might be favored over relying on international aid donors in order to maintain self-determination and ownership of development programmes. However, further macroeconomic analysis is required in order to assess the feasibility of state-sponsored projects; this is however beyond the scope of this paper.

Importantly, none of the organizations received funding from their national government, nor any Official Development Aid from external development agencies at the time of the experiments, and the organizations running the UBI experiments were responsible for fundraising before and during the experiments, which places additional pressures on the organization and diverts some of the resources into fundraising, and out of the pockets of the beneficiaries. However, there appears to be a shift in securing funds for such programmes: GiveDirectly has begun working with the Development Innovation Ventures department of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID/DIV) to co-create a quasi-UBI project in Malawi, where unconditional cash transfers are provided at household level (Household grants) (GiveDirectly, 2018; Mukhopadhyay, 2019). This Government and NGO cooperation hints that future UBI projects can indeed be conducted in cooperation. Importantly, this would relieve pressures of fundraising from NGOs, although it does raise other issues. As researched heavily in Civil Society studies, NGO and government cooperation can cause other challenges, such as resource dependency and blurred NGO autonomy (Arvidson & Linde, 2019; Keck, 2015).

Whilst it is somewhat beyond the scope of this paper, it ought to be noted that there are a number of government-led targeted unconditional cash transfer programmes across a multitude of fragile states that can provide insights on how an UBI project could be launched solely through government funds. In Zambia, for instance, the government has been running two quasi-UBI projects – the Multiple Category Cash Transfer Programme and the Child Grant Programme (de Hoop *et al.*, 2019). The Zambian programmes are not strictly speaking UBI, as there is no element of ‘universality’ and there are strict targeting criteria. In further research, much can be learned about the targeted cash transfer schemes pertaining to funding allocations.

However, reliance on charitable donations or fundraising campaigns of the NGOs is quite evidently not a feasible long-term solution and sudden disturbances to the available funds might jeopardize one the core characteristics of UBI, its predictable periodic nature. Another thoroughly researched aspect of vulnerability

in Fragile States is *aid volatility*, meaning that many fragile states experience fluctuation in the levels of development aid; causing uncertainty and uncompleted projects (Chandy et al., 2016). Donations can however provide enough funds for running pilot projects that can then be used to incentivise political mobilization for launching UBI projects at the larger scale. Pertaining to funding challenges, reprioritisation of ODA funds, in accordance with the Paris Declaration, would potentially have transformative consequences in addressing funding challenges.

### **5.1.3 Security & Safety Risks**

There are a number of challenges to overcome prior to the launch of any development programme. One particularly important one, is ensuring the safety of the stakeholder *in situ*, as endangering their well-being is sure to cause moral dilemmas. Security related challenges were present in GiveDirectly's experiment in Kenya. In Kenya, conflict and violent protest, due to political instability, disrupted their day-to-day activities, and jeopardized the launch of the programme due to safety concerns. If the stakeholders cannot conduct their programme in safe environments, it appears to pose significant hurdles for the project as a whole. GiveDirectly had to postpone the initial launch of their programme by two months due to civil and political unrest following the 2017 Kenyan general elections (McFarland, 2017). The election results showed that the incumbent president Uhuru Kenyatta was re-elected, but the opposition refused to accept the election results, citing hacking and irregularities, and took the case to the supreme court where the election results were annulled (BBC News, 2017; Al Jazeera, 2017). Prompted by the election results, there were major protests that turned deadly in Kibera, Mathare and importantly in the opposition leaders and competing presidential candidates Raila Odinga's hometown, Kisumu (Torchia & Odula, 2017: The Economist, 2017). Protestors had blocked roads with bonfires and boulders, and police had opened fire against the protesters as well as utilized tear gas. Kisumu, being one of the counties in which GiveDirectly's project countries,

was considered too unsafe for launching the project in time. Paul Niehaus, the founder of GiveDirectly has explicitly stated that minimum security requirements affected the village selection for their experiment (GiveWell, 2018).

Although the prominent UBI advocate Guy Standing has written about UBI's potential as a humanitarian aid tool in conflict and natural disaster situations, evidence of its feasibility and practical applications does not exist apart from theoretical texts (Standing, 2017). Conflict situations pose a number of challenges besides the evident safety concerns. In the OECD Fragile States list, many of the lowest ranking countries, such as Yemen, Syria, South Sudan, and Afghanistan all have varying degrees of military conflict. With on-going conflict, there appears to be no possibility to conduct an UBI programme, based on the findings of this thesis – safety appears to be a prerequisite for implementation.

## **5.2 Project Design**

During the coding of data, codes emerged such as 'enrollment', 'mobile payments', 'money agents', 'smart cards', 'electricity', and 'network'. The underpinning common theme is the practical transferral (or challenge of practical transferral) of the grant i.e. how is the money conveyed to the recipient. These challenges constitute the core of how the UBI project ought to be designed. If UBI is to be considered in Fragile States, this issue needs to be carefully addressed.

### **5.2.1 Ensuring Universality: Targeting & Enrollment**

Whether or not the UBI project is launched at a regional or national level, the initial stage for launching the project is to ensure that the UBI is indeed **Universal**, i.e. everyone who is willing must be targeted by the project.

This undertaking is in most cases a difficult endeavor, relying heavily on both national surveys, census, and active civil society participation. In the Namibian and Ugandan cases, the number of participants were significantly smaller than in the Kenyan one. Thus, in small scale projects, targeting and

enrollment may be easily conducted through communal or village meetings, as well as local stakeholders simply approaching individuals door-to-door. In Kenya however, with the number of recipients being some 20.000, provides us with a practical example on how the effort can be undertaken with larger projects.

Relying on national registries or census alone seems to be an inefficient or incomplete method to reach the recipients of UBI in larger projects. In many Fragile States, such infrastructure might be limited if present at all (Harsch, 2020). GiveDirectly had a few different methods on reaching out to the populations. Initially, they looked at national surveys to determine regional poverty levels to select the general area for their project, as their mission is guided by pro-poor approaches. These observations were supplemented by field workers visiting the area to assess whether or not the area could benefit from the programme. Furthermore, their selection of villages was dependent on what capacities were present, i.e. whether or not there were locations to situate their field workers, and whether or not M-pesa agents were available. Once the village is selected, all households are enrolled in their own systems. Thus the individual recipients do not need to prove their eligibility through other documentation, such as IDs, ensuring that targeting covers everyone. GiveDirectly does conduct randomized audits, to ensure that the villagers enrolled are indeed living where they said (GiveWell, 2012).

### **5.2.2 Grant Transfer Mechanisms**

#### *Mobile Phones*

For a policy-maker considering the implementation of an UBI programme in their country's context, addressing the practicalities of the transferral of funds whilst ensuring unconditionality is a relatively complex undertaking. It is complex because there are a number of provisions that must be in place prior to implementation. The UBI must be designed in a manner where it is truly

unconditional; there cannot be criteria, such as income levels, education, religious affiliation, access to payment methods, etc. that would exclude any given individual.

As a grant transfer mechanism in GiveDirectly's and EIGHT's projects, they utilized mobile payment services. The strength of mobile phone based payment services is that it facilitates reliable periodic payments, individuals can have 'virtual' currency i.e. no need to store cash, and that once it is set up, it is relatively cheap. Utilizing mobile currency further feeds into mitigating safety risks, as individuals do not need to store cash, or withdraw it all at once (GiveWell, 2015). However, this entails that a number of other services are in place, functioning and reliable. First and foremost, every individual must have a working mobile phone, which many people in Fragile contexts do not. To solve this problem, at the launch of the project, individuals can be provided with a simple mobile phone, the cost of which is deduced from the initial transfers. Furthermore, such as was the case in Uganda, there might be individuals who may not know how to utilize the phone for withdrawing the grant, or checking it for account balance. In the 'Crazy Money' documentary, it was seen how groups were taught how to utilize the mobile by other members of the community during the initial launch of the project.

Secondly, there must be ways to charge the mobile phone in order to access the grant. This means that there must be some sort of access to electricity, whether through an electricity grid, or through solar panels or similar. This is a huge challenge and effectively renders UBI as infeasible in certain rural areas where there is no electricity. Similarly, many rural areas have patchy or non-existent mobile networks (no signal), which again renders mobile payments as a method of transferral useless, unless these issues are fixed first.

### *Bank Cards*

The Namibian pilot project effectively offers some solutions for instances where access to electricity or mobile networks are compromised, although

accompanied with caveats of its own. Instead of mobile money, BIG utilized so-called 'smart cards', a type of banking card with which one can withdraw money from a cash dispenser. As there was no fixed cash dispenser, an armored vehicle fitted with one would arrive at the village at a predetermined time and location. However, after 6 months the practical payment was taken over by the Namibian Post Office, which has the added advantage of enrolling the recipients into the formal banking system, enhancing the capacities of formal financial institutions. Every villager attained his or her bank card by the provision of ID's, birth certificates or voter cards; however, as many of the villagers were not in the possession of any national identification documents, they used Baptismal certificates instead (Haarmann *et al.*, 2008).

However, the utilization of a Baptismal certificate, albeit seemingly suitable for this instance, could cause marginalization of other religious groups in the region and be a target of criticism. Furthermore, as UBI is designed to be unconditional, yet if the transferral procedure prerequisites religious documents, this would essentially apply conditions to UBI; namely religious affiliation.

There are regions in fragile states where individuals may not be in possession of any of the required documents for opening a so-called smart card. Furthermore, if the NGO does not have the capacity to set up mobile payments as they did in Kenya, and individuals who do not have access to mobile banking nor documents required for a smart-card, there might be proportions of the population that might be sidelined from the projects altogether. To remedy this situation, the first step in enrollment would be the acquisition of national IDs, which may be problematic due to long distances to state offices, or simply unattainable due to lack of institutional capacities.<sup>2</sup> All in all, a combination of smart-cards and mobile pay would encapsulate most populations, although other solutions for the further marginalized peoples must be established.

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<sup>2</sup> Sustainable Development Goal 16.9: By 2030, provide legal identity for all, including birth registration indicator 16.9.1 Proportion of children under 5 years of age whose births have been registered with a civil authority, by age – Indicator 17.19.2 Proportion of countries that (a) have conducted at least one population and housing census in the last 10 years; and (b) have achieved 100 percent birth registration and 80 per cent death registration.

### 5.3. Project Ownership

During the data collection for this thesis, it appears that the vast majority of challenges in running UBI experiments come before and at implementation, and once the projects are launched, the number of challenges is significantly reduced. However, two noteworthy observations were made during the analysis; NGO ownership of the projects appear to strengthen their activities and good civil society relationship during the project affects the reception of projects, and potential results of UBI projects.

#### 5.3.1 Ownership

*“Design UBI through national dialogue involving government, civil society, social partners and community representatives to discuss potential benefits and trade-offs and build societal consensus on the form of the UBI and its integration into broader social protection systems.”*

Williams, 2021; p. 5

A central question in the post-developmental school of thought is that of ownership, referring to the ‘trustees’ of development. OECDs *Principles, Accra Agenda for Action* and the *Paris Declaration* all advocate for increased recipient country ownership, as well as increased cooperation with Civil Society Organization and NGOs. Thus, when discussing UBI as an alternative approach to development aid, the role of ownership of the project is important to address.

In all of the cases analyzed in this thesis, the UBI experiments have been conducted by NGOs; in Kenya and Uganda, they were international NGOs, whereas the Namibian one is an example of a local coalition, essentially functioning as an NGO. The strength of NGO work is the close collaboration with the local people. In all the cases, the NGOs worked with people from the communities.



Another interesting observation emerges from GiveDirectly's work; it has been approached multiple times by international development agencies such as UNICEF and World Food Programme to provide their assistance, funds and expertise with GiveDirectly's programme. However, they have repeatedly declined such offers (GiveWell, 2016b) in order to maintain simpler operations structures (GiveWell, 2015). Furthermore, according to a conversation with the GiveDirectly COO, GiveDirectly has refused the idea of handing the ownership of the programme to the national government. He states that "Emerging market governments typically want to control the implementation of their own social programs, and some non-governmental organizations build programs and gradually hand them over to the government. While there is some value in this, it does not seem like a good way for GiveDirectly to add value, since much of the value that GiveDirectly adds is through strong implementation of its programs (which it would not be able to control if it transferred its programs to governments)." (GiveWell, 2016a; p. 5). GiveDirectly hopes, however, that the benchmarks it sets in terms of operational efficiency and excellence will effectively set the bar for what other cash transfer programs, including government-led ones, should be able to achieve.

In order for the UBI project to align with the recommendations of OECDs *Principles*, local NGOs being the primary stakeholders in the projects, as opposed to foreign actors, has clear benefits. However, local state actors may very well create UBI projects of their design; however the analysis of those is beyond the scope of this paper.

### **5.3.2 Civil Society Relationships**

*“The most remarkable thing happened ... the community started a process of mobilization, conscientization and self-empowerment. The community elected their own [Basic Income Grant] committee”*

Bishop Zephania Kameeta, Chair of BIG Coalition

An unexpected finding of this thesis was the importance of a good relationship between the NGOs and civil society during the project and at launch. UBI is characterized as a development programme by notions of self-determination and empowerment (van Parijs, 1997). Thus, an UBI should only be implemented when the civil society should desire to participate in the project. Both in the Ugandan and Kenyan example, there were individuals and even villages who were not willing to accept the grant, due to general skepticism of the projects. Furthermore, active civil society engagement during the project seems to have consequential effects on the potential positive results. After all, from the post-development perspective, the trustees of development ought to be those directly concerned with it.

In Kenya, GiveDirectly's project faced extremely high refusal rates in certain villages, where at times some 70% of households refused to accept involvement in the programme (GiveWell, 2016). Consequently, GiveDirectly had to survey new villages for the implementation of its project. Research conducted by GiveDirectly showed there to be two primary reasons for refusal: (i) the presence of a vocal religious leader or politician who might believe they have reason to mobilize the community against the payments (such as politicians who worry the organization or payments may be aligned with their opponents), or (ii) a history in the area of hostility to NGOs born either of bad prior experiences or otherwise (ibid). However, the organization found that communicating with the stakeholders (informing them of their non-political affiliation etc.) had significant impact, reducing refusal rate from 70% to 20% (ibid.). In EIGHT's experiment in Uganda, as seen in the documentary 'crazy money', a villager refused to accept the grant convinced that the organization was associated with witchcraft and thus accepting the grant would have fateful consequences (Crazy Money, 2020); the

individual further forced his wife to refuse accepting the grant as well. However, refusal rates in general were very low across the cases besides these examples, and overall grant recipients embrace the transformative potential of their grants (GDlive, n.d.). In Kenya, particularly in Siaya county, GiveDirectly's presence is well established, their development efforts known to the residents, and there the refusal rates are effectively negligible (GiveWell, 2016b).

Conversely, active civil society engagements with the projects have been seen across the experiments. In Namibia, after the launch of the project, the community itself created a 18-member committee to mobilize the villagers and advise residents on how they could improve their lives with the grant (Haarmann et al., 2018). In Kyataruga, Uganda, Community group participation grew from 14% to 71% after the introduction of UBI, particularly in village saving and loans associations (EIGHT, n.d.). This suggests that the introduction of an UBI can effectively assist with community mobilization and empowerment (Widerquist, 2018).

In summary, whether or not UBI will yield positive results in any given region, is also dependent on the relationship between the conducting organization and the civil society. Thus, the implementation of UBI does appear to necessitate the establishment of or the existence of such relationships. For Fragile States, this observation does appear to have significant implications. The findings would suggest that in order to launch an UBI programme, there either needs to be a pre-existing organization willing to take upon such a project, or alternatively, a new organization can be formed, although significant effort might need to be placed on creating community relationships through various communication channels.

## **6. Discussion and Conclusion**

To begin with, this thesis began by formulating the research context i.e. the background. The research context commenced with a critique of conventional modalities to aid; particularly criticizing their inefficacy, as well as their tendency

to cause more harm than good. This inefficiency is particularly visible, in so-called Fragile States, where the poor living conditions, dire poverty and reprehensible rates of hunger are most rampant, and thus there is chronic need for development interventions. Conversely, Fragile States struggle to receive sufficient ODA, as the conditions in such countries are stated to be ‘difficult sociopolitical contexts’, thus perceived to be less enticing for donor countries. This thesis then presented the well established literature about UBI and demonstrated its conceptual mechanisms for empowerment, emancipation and development, and argued that UBI has great potential in invoking positive change in Fragile States at higher rates of efficacy. The analysis section then set out to discover what are the challenges in implementing UBI projects in Fragile States, and discovering how some of these challenges have been met in previous cases.

Firstly, it ought to be noted that Fragile States is a term that is used in this paper solely because major development actors utilize the term. It is a term that presupposes that states that score lower in various development indicators do so, because the state is incapable/unwilling of generating economic growth and/or comprehensive social policy. The chapter on ‘Fragile States’ showed that in many cases, their low ranking on development indicators may be caused by exogenous factors. Furthermore, the categorization of nations into Fragile States wrongly assumes that they are a homogenous group with similar socio-political situations.

Ultimately, the response to the question of what are the challenges in implementing UBI in Fragile States is – *it depends*. Fragile States are not a homogenous group but one that has extreme variability from one another. However, in this thesis I have been able to hone down on some important key aspects and variables. The challenges that have been discovered in this thesis include political challenges, security and safety risks, funding challenges, capacity challenges to target and enroll populations, the prerequisites for electricity grids and mobile networks, and strong NGOs or other actors to take ownership of the project and to facilitate relationship-building with civil society. These variables have been inductively derived from materials from and relating to other UBI projects explicitly.

Again, it ought to be reiterated here, that the challenges that have been discovered in this thesis, and the mechanisms on how to overcome them may or may not be present in any given ‘Fragile State’; in one state amassing political support might be impossible, whereas in another it can be easily attained, in another mobile networks may cover the entire region, whilst in another there the coverage is low. The core message here is that the findings of this thesis merely indicate what challenges and mechanisms to overcome them have existed, thus this thesis provides solely a model that can be useful.

OECDs *Principles* state “Take context as the starting point” as the first step in engaging in Development Aid in Fragile States. This thesis concurs with the statement wholeheartedly. The model created for the analysis indicates some key factors to consider in the implementation process; yet context specific circumstances may facilitate or hinder the implementation of it. Thus the model in this thesis functions more as an abstract level guideline, and not an absolute ‘blueprint’ for UBI implementation. There are certainly other mechanisms for its implementation, mechanisms that have not been addressed in this thesis.

## **Conclusion**

Since the mid-20th century, many Western countries have embarked on missions of ‘development’, pouring trillions of dollars over the last seven decades into various development projects in so-called less developed countries. However altruistic this initially sounds, the discourse surrounding Official Development Aid appears to be split into various schools of thought where others argue that ODA is inefficient or overly ambitious (Easterly, 2003) or even malignant (Moyo, 2009), others appear to situate in the middle and argue that development aid is largely responsible for the macroeconomic development of many Sub-saharan countries (Juselius *et al.*, 2013), and some vehemently advocate that it is the moral obligation of richer countries to ‘end poverty’ through intense and broad development projects (Sachs, 2004).

This thesis has taken a moderate middle-road arguing that ODA is powerful and potentially transformative, but its approaches to implementation are arguably outdated and require significant overhaul. Universal Basic Income, a development aid approach congruent with Post-development theory, local empowerment, participatory approaches, increased efficacy, and recipient dignity has shown to truly possess transformative qualities (see Bastagali et al., 2016). As such, its potential ought to be explored further.

So-called Fragile States, unfairly and arbitrarily labeled as such, do pose difficult development contexts particularly for conventional development approaches, but that oughtn't disincentivize. Considering that an increasing proportion of the worlds most vulnerable inhabit such states, it is the mandate of development actors to increase their efforts in such areas, not avoid them, particularly if the commitments to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals are to be taken seriously. Universal Basic Income is one of many alternative approaches to development that is cost efficient, emancipatory, devoid of donor conditionalities, increases recipient country ownership, with measurable spill-over effects to the economy, level of education, health, nutrition, happiness and trust in institutions (Bastagali *et al.*, 2016, Gentilini, 2020).

However, there are still a number of challenges in its implementation that may disincentivize global actors to channel their development aid to such projects. Some of these challenges, such as funding, can be overcome easier if there are changes in DAC approaches and intensified UBI advocacy, other challenges however, require significant work in local contexts, and in certain fragile states, particularly those characterized by conflict, it is simply an impossible approach. All in all, there is reason for cautious optimism of seeing more UBI projects scattered across various fragile contexts.

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