

BACHELOR'S THESIS EXAMINER REPORT
PPE – Bachelor's in Politics, Philosophy and Economics
Faculty of Social Sciences, Charles University

Thesis title:	Basic Income as a Possible Solution to the Trade-off between Full Employment and Economic Growth in Germany
Student's name:	Samuel Lucas Basler
Referee's name:	Janusz Salamon, Ph.D.

Criteria	Definition	Maximum	Points
Major Criteria		80	
	Contribution and argument (quality of research and analysis, originality)	45	
	Research question (definition of objectives, plausibility of hypotheses)	15	
	Theoretical framework (methods relevant to the research question)	15	
<i>Total</i>		75	
Minor Criteria		20	
	Sources, literature	10	
	Presentation (language, style, cohesion)	5	
	Manuscript form (structure, logical coherence, layout, tables, figures)	5	
<i>Total</i>		20	
TOTAL		95	

Plagiarism-check (URKUND) match score: No plagiarism detected. I judge the thesis to be an original work of the author.

[NB:] If the plagiarism-check (URKUND) match score is above 15%, the reviewer has to include his/her assessment of the originality of the reviewed thesis in his/her review.

Reviewer's commentary according to the above criteria (min. 1800 characters including spaces when recommending a passing grade, min. 2500 characters including spaces when recommending a failing grade):

Samuel Basler took seriously his status of a student of an interdisciplinary study programme and chose to explore in his Bachelor's thesis an interdisciplinary topic that calls for analysis of economic, political and philosophical (ethical) considerations. He argues for ethical obligation, social desirability, as well as economic and political plausibility of the proposal of guaranteeing the basic income to all citizens of Germany as a response to the new challenges resulting the introduction of AI and other technological innovations into the processes of production that is likely to disrupt the entire labor market and lead to an industry-wide wave of layoffs. Such disruption would frustrate the central aims of the Stability Pact of 1967 as the guide to the tax policies and other state economic and labour regulations underlying the social market economy in Germany. This choice of topic is commendable, since the topic of his choice was bound to be methodologically challenging, intertwining, as

it does, issues and arguments that tend to fall on either the descriptive or the normative side of the methodological divide in social sciences, the mutual relation of which is a subject of a never-ending controversy. Wisely, Samuel Basler navigates these uncharted methodological waters by applying in the economic part of his thesis methodological models he learned in the course of his studies of macroeconomics and microeconomics in Bayreuth. He allows to guide himself also by the leading contributors to the debate about basic income, such as Fergnani who considers four future scenarios (called Industry 4.0) of the impact of the industry which will incorporate AI to a degree that will reshape its dynamic. However, there is much in the thesis that can be considered an original contribution to the debate about basic income because Samuel explores issues that are specific to the German economic and social context (of the “social market economy”). As a philosopher, I can especially commend Samuel for taking into account diverse ethical perspectives, in addition to the fair amount of economic data and political factors. Indeed, at times a reader might get a sense that this short thesis is packed with arguments and data that might call for a book-length treatment. The only question that was bothering me as I read the final version of Samuel’s work was to what extent the conclusions he has reached rely to the existing social consensus that may actually be undermined by the changes resulting from the “AI revolution” that is emerging on the horizon (perhaps the existing consensus has held in Germany for decades precisely because the population at large had a sense of constant progress, or at least stability – what if the stability would collapse to the degree that would undermine the social solidarity which would make the basic income a politically plausible proposition?). For the a similar reason, it is not clear to me to what extent Samuel’s conclusions are to any degree universalisable, or whether they presuppose numerous ethical and political assumptions that are accepted by majority of citizens in Germany for a host of historical and cultural reasons that will not apply outside of Germany (and perhaps also Scandinavia). Even if that would be the case, Samuel’s work might serve as a case study that could be replicated in the context of different countries starting with different ethical and political presuppositions (for example, a more libertarian value package in the US).

Proposed grade (A-B-C-D-E-F): A

Suggested questions for the defence are:

How might the *limited* predictability of the future economic development (such as the unforeseeable but possible *positive* changes resulting from the future technological discoveries) impact your core argument? To what extent your argument relies on the *current* assumptions about the state of affairs?

I recommend the thesis for final defence.

Referee Signature

Overall grading scheme at FSV UK:

TOTAL POINTS	GRADE	Quality standard
91 – 100	A	= outstanding (high honor)
81 – 90	B	= superior (honor)
71 – 80	C	= good
61 – 70	D	= satisfactory
51 – 60	E	= low pass at a margin of failure
0 – 50	F	= failing. The thesis is not recommended for defence.