

Evelyn Forget, University of Manitoba – 14.12.2018, UQAM

When Economic Field Experiments Go Off the Rails.... The case of Basic Income

Calls for evidence-informed policymaking have grown louder in recent decades. Advocates argue that the systematic use of the best available scientific evidence can help us avoid harm and achieve social policy goals while avoiding the deliberate manipulation of scientific evidence to achieve political ends. The Basic Income experiments taking place in Finland, Ontario (Canada), Barcelona, the Netherlands and elsewhere seem an ideal way to generate solid evidence for policymaking. However, the recent cancellation of Ontario's project holds some important lessons. This seminar discusses the inevitable tensions inherent in evidence-informed policymaking, and the significant challenges of moving Basic Income experiments from theory to practice.

Evelyn L Forget is an economist in the Rady School of Medicine at the University of Manitoba. She unearthed and re-analyzed the data collected during an almost forgotten Basic Income experiment conducted in Canada during the 1970s (Mincome) and demonstrated that hospitalizations declined by 8.5% for subjects compared to a matched control, that visits to family doctors also declined and that high school completion rates increased. This research helped re-invigorate and broaden policy debate around Basic Income internationally. She has more recently been involved in the Ontario Basic Income evaluation team, and has consulted with governments and researchers involved in Basic Income experiments worldwide. Her most recent book, *Basic Income for Canadians: the key to a healthier, happier, more secure life for all*, was published by James Lorimer and Co. on October 2, 2018.