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What Do Unemployed Workers Want: Guaranteed Jobs or Guaranteed Income?

by

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ABSTRACT

This paper studies unemployed workers' preferences for two widely debated social policy innovations often framed as rivals: a job guarantee and a basic income. It addresses how support for the two policies compares, how policy generosity shapes that support, and which groups are most supportive. Leveraging a randomized experiment in a representative survey of unemployed workers in Austria, the analysis documents broad support for both policies: consistently higher for guaranteed jobs though a majority support both policies. Increasing generosity raises support for each policy, and crossing a pay threshold above average unemployment benefits sharply increases willingness to accept guaranteed jobs. Support and willingness to participate are strongest among disadvantaged respondents, while a small socio-economically advantaged minority opposes both policies across generosity levels. The results suggest that guaranteed jobs and guaranteed income are better understood as complementary rather than opposing strategies for strengthening the welfare state in the twenty-first century.

JEL Codes: I31; J68

Keywords: job guarantee; universal basic income; unemployed workers; survey experiment; social policy preferences; welfare state attitudes.

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A scientific use file of the survey data has been made available publicly in the Austrian Social Science Data Archive at <https://data.aussda.at/dataset.xhtml?persistentId=doi:10.11587/XJNNYA> (Schönherr and Lehner 2022).

1. INTRODUCTION

“The proposal of the negative income tax is a proposal to help poor people by giving them money, which is what they need.”

—Milton Friedman 1962

“Man does not live by bread alone. We need more, not just games. We need work under humane conditions to be fully human.”

—Marie Jahoda 1984

Is income support sufficient to alleviate poverty? Do people need paid employment to participate and flourish in society? The debate about the value of work is at least as old as capitalism (see Lafargue, [1893] 2023) and has long produced competing visions of social protection: from unconditional income support to guaranteed public employment. In recent years, guaranteed jobs and guaranteed income have become much debated social policy proposals (Standing 2017, Tcherneva 2020, Kasy and Lehner 2026b), with prominent trials taking place across the world (Baird, McIntosh, and Özler 2011; Haushofer and Shapiro 2016; Verho, Hämäläinen, and Kanninen 2022; Bohmann et al. 2025; Kasy and Lehner 2026a) and growing support from European and international institutions.¹ While those trials have yielded important insights into behavioral responses, less is known about how primary beneficiary groups view the two policies. This matters because beneficiary support shapes policy take-up and, ultimately, the effectiveness and political sustainability of such programs. Even well-designed policies may fail if they are not accepted by those they are intended to support.

While numerous studies have explored preferences for basic income support (Roosma and Oorschot 2020; Vlandas 2021; Weisstanner 2022) and assessed support for its different versions (Chrisp, Pulkka, and García 2020; Stadelmann-Steffen and Dermont 2020; Rincón, Vlandas, and Hiilamo 2022; Laenen 2023; Rincon 2023), no comparable evidence exists for job guarantees. Direct

1. The European Commission has provided €23 million to fund job guarantee pilot schemes across Europe, and the European Parliament, the OECD, the ILO, and the UN Human Rights Council have all promoted ongoing trials (ILO 2021; OECD 2023; UN Special Rapporteur Olivier De Schutter 2023; European Parliament 2023).

comparisons between the two proposals are missing as well, despite a public debate that often presents them as rival routes to social protection. An additional contribution of this article is to provide evidence on a hard-to-reach primary beneficiary group. In general population surveys, this group is often too small for meaningful subgroup analysis and may be non-representative when standard survey modes are used. Yet, this group is central to the implementation and effectiveness of both policies. This article addresses all three gaps jointly in a representative survey experiment of unemployed workers in Austria: It provides the first direct comparison of support for guaranteed jobs and guaranteed income among a primary beneficiary group, uses randomized variation in payment levels to identify the causal effect of generosity on support for each scheme and on willingness to participate, and traces subgroup differences in support and job acceptance using detailed information on respondents' socio-economic circumstances and labor market experiences.

The empirical design follows directly from these three questions and is centered around a survey experiment for a representative telephone survey in Austria. First, the survey measures support for guaranteed jobs and guaranteed income for the same respondents, which makes it possible to compare overall support and to distinguish support for one policy, the other, both, or neither. Second, respondents are randomly assigned to one of three payment levels, which identifies the causal effect of generosity on support for each scheme and on willingness to accept a guaranteed job. The randomized information varies the monthly payment level of the scheme. Participants are informed that the scheme provides either an amount equal to average unemployment benefits (€1,000, Group 1), a low wage corresponding to the 10th percentile of the wage distribution (€1,500, Group 2), or a living wage at the 33rd percentile of the wage distribution (€2,000, Group 3). Third, the survey collects rich information on respondents' socio-economic characteristics and personal experiences, which I use to study determinants of support and to analyze who would likely accept a guaranteed job if offered one.

The findings speak to the three questions examined: First, support is broad for both guaranteed jobs and guaranteed income, but it is consistently higher for guaranteed jobs. At the same time, most respondents support both policies, contrary to a public debate in which they are often framed as competing alternatives. Barely anyone supports guaranteed income while opposing guaranteed jobs. Second, increasing generosity raises support for each of the policies and sharply increases willingness to accept a guaranteed job. The largest change occurs when the payment rises from the level of average unemployment benefits to a low wage just above that level, pointing to an economically meaningful threshold for job acceptance. Third, support and willingness to participate are closely related to respondents' socio-economic position and labor market experiences:

Poorer health, lower unemployment benefits, and experienced labor market discrimination are associated with stronger support for guaranteed jobs and guaranteed income. The same factors, together with lower occupational prestige, also predict a higher willingness to accept a guaranteed job. These patterns indicate that the policies draw their strongest support from respondents facing greater economic insecurity, whereas core opposition is concentrated among a relatively advantaged minority.

Taken together, the findings suggest that debates on guaranteed jobs and guaranteed income are best understood not as competing alternatives but as complementary strategies for strengthening the welfare state in the twenty-first century. Among unemployed workers, both policies command substantial support, and support is stronger when schemes are more generous. The results underscore the value of studying primary beneficiaries directly, whose support matters most for take up and effective implementation, which in turn affects political sustainability.

2. THE CASE FOR GUARANTEED JOBS AND GUARANTEED INCOME

Guaranteed jobs and guaranteed income have attracted renewed attention as responses to unemployment, labor market insecurity, and dissatisfaction with existing welfare state arrangements. Yet, the debate, often framed around the value of work, is at least as old as capitalism. Notably, Karl Marx's son-in-law, Paul Lafargue, made an early contribution to this discourse with his 1883 pamphlet, *Le Droit à la paresse* (*The Right to Be Lazy*), which contrasts markedly with the ethos of the *right to work* (Lafargue, [1893] 2023). Even earlier Thomas More (1516) imagined a form of guaranteed income, which is often cited by contemporary advocates, who position basic income as a counterpoint to guaranteed jobs (Standing 2005, 2018), and vice versa (Tcherneva 2012). Neither has been part of the conventional toolbox of social and labor market policy (Ebbinghaus 2020; Lehner and Tamesberger 2024). Today, guaranteed jobs and guaranteed income are no longer merely normative ideas. They have become central policy proposals for welfare state reform. Both proposals seek to reduce economic insecurity, but they do so through different institutional logics. Guaranteed jobs tie income protection to paid work and public job creation. Guaranteed income disconnects income security from labor market participation and provides support unconditionally. This contrast makes the two proposals both politically salient and analytically useful to compare.

2.1 Guaranteed Jobs

Guaranteed job proposals, commonly referred to as a job guarantee or an employment guarantee, promise access to publicly funded employment for people who cannot find work in the regular labor market (Tcherneva 2020, Romeo 2024). Critically, participation is voluntary, so programs extend the outside options of eligible persons. The policy's appeal rests not only on income support, but also on the idea that paid work provides structure, social recognition, and collective purpose. Participants enter a formal employment relationship and are compensated with a real wage.

Recent pilots have moved the proposal from abstract debate into policy practice. They include the Marienthal job guarantee in Austria (Kasy and Lehner 2026a), Basibaan in the Netherlands, and Territoires zéro chômeur de longue durée in France (*Zero long-term unemployed territories*, Markowitsch and Scharle, 2024). The latter, as the largest job guarantee initiative in Europe, has already expanded to encompass roughly half of the country's territories with the backing of France's parliament and president. These programs have inspired similar projects in Belgium and Italy. The pilots have led the European Commission to provide €23 million in 2024 for job guarantee pilots and prompted the European Parliament to pass a resolution advocating for the expansion of job guarantees across Europe to facilitate a just transition (European Parliament 2023). These recent developments in Europe draw inspiration from historical precedents in the United States, most notably Franklin D. Roosevelt's Works Progress Administration (WPA) during the New Deal era. Outside high-income countries, the Indian National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) stands as the most substantial project of its kind, providing employment to between 5 and 100 million workers annually since 2006 (Ehmke 2016; De Venanzi 2020; Muralidharan, Niehaus, and Sukhtankar 2023).

2.2 Guaranteed Income

Guaranteed income, commonly referred to as (universal) basic income, has emerged as one of the most extensively discussed social policy innovations in recent years (Standing 2017; Van Parijs and Vanderborght 2017; Prainsack 2020, 2026). Proposals promise a regular cash payment independent of work status and recipients' income sources or wealth. This unconditionality marks the primary distinction from guaranteed jobs. A core appeal rests on breaking the link between employment and income. Further objectives include provision of universal income security, poverty alleviation, and the simplification of fragmented welfare systems.

Several trials of guaranteed income have taken place and fueled the debate. At the national level, pilots have taken place in Finland (Kangas et al. 2021; Verho, Hämäläinen, and Kanninen 2022)

and Germany (Bernhard et al. 2025; Bohmann et al. 2025). At the state level, the Alaska Permanent Fund Dividend represents the first permanent implementation of such a program, providing an annual payment to state residents (Jones and Marinescu 2022). Historically, trials experienced a high phase during the 1970s in the United States and Canada (Kershaw et al. 1976; Watts and Rees 1977; Burtless and Hausman 1978; Robins 1985; Ashenfelter and Plant 1990; Hum and Simpson 1993; Calnitsky and Latner 2017), a period in which guaranteed income was much-debated in the form of a negative income tax (Friedman 1962). A large body of evidence from developing countries further studies unconditional cash transfers at scale and documents their effects on consumption, labor supply, and well-being (Baird, McIntosh, and Özler 2011; Haushofer and Shapiro 2016; Banerjee, Niehaus, and Suri 2019).

The contrast between the two proposals is not whether each addresses insecurity, but how each does so. Guaranteed jobs offer income through employment and retain work conditionality. Guaranteed income offers income without requiring work and, in the design studied here, replaces existing benefits. This difference places the two policies as potential alternatives at the core of contemporary debates on welfare state reform and the role of employment, and motivates comparing how potential beneficiaries evaluate them.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Attitudes of Beneficiaries

Most research on welfare attitudes studies the general population. This paper instead focuses on unemployed workers as a primary beneficiary group. That perspective is substantively important because beneficiaries are the people whose support matters most for take-up and implementation. These groups are often too small or insufficiently represented in general population surveys for meaningful subgroup analysis. Few, noteworthy studies have examined how individual risk perceptions influence social policy preferences (Gingrich and Ansell 2012; Rehm, Hacker, and Schlesinger 2012).² Previous research studying public attitudes suggests that social policy support observed among unemployed workers can be considered an upper bound for the general population, as support tends to be stronger among beneficiaries (Kangas 1997; Svallfors 1997; Fraile and Ferrer 2005; Naumann, Buss, and Bähr 2016). The gap in support between beneficiaries and

2. Beyond political science, industrial relations has established a tradition of surveying workers about their preferences concerning employment relations and workplace practices (Kochan 1979; Freeman and Rogers 1999; Kochan et al. 2019).

the general population is notably significant in the context of unemployment support and has also been documented for basic income (Vlandas 2021).

3.2 Preferences by Social Policy Design

A second strand of literature shows that support for social policy depends not only on who is asked, but also on how the policy is designed. This literature is especially relevant for the present analysis because the experiment varies a core design feature, namely generosity, and compares two proposals that differ fundamentally in their degree of conditionality.

Policy design critically influences public support (Chrisp, Pulkka, and García 2020). The unconditional nature of guaranteed income, that is, the absence of work requirements, is among its most contested features (Rincón, Vlandas, and Hiilamo 2022; Laenen, Van Hootehem, and Rossetti 2023), consistent with broader evidence that conditionality in unemployment protection remains widely supported (Buß, Ebbinghaus, and Naumann 2017). Indeed, unemployment benefits and redistribution receive more support than guaranteed income (Weisstanner 2022). Similarly, conditional cash transfers that require active participation, such as the *Participation Income* proposed by Atkinson (1996), often attract more support than unconditional ones. This literature suggests that, all else equal, guaranteed jobs may command stronger support than guaranteed income because they preserve reciprocity through paid work.

Guaranteed jobs, however, differ from other conditional schemes in a second important respect. They do not merely condition income on participation, but offer unemployed workers access to paid work as a social activity and a source of collective purpose (Jahoda 1984). In that sense, guaranteed jobs may appeal both because they provide earnings and because they restore the latent functions of employment. This argument is consistent with the high willingness to work documented among long term unemployed workers in the Marienthal job guarantee pilot (Kasy and Lehner 2026a). Together, these arguments provide a clear basis for the expectation that support for guaranteed jobs will exceed support for guaranteed income among unemployed workers. The same literature also motivates expectations about generosity. More generous basic income schemes, especially those above subsistence level, attract stronger support (Laenen 2023).

By comparing guaranteed jobs to guaranteed income, this vignette survey experiment extends previous conjoint studies that focused on design features of guaranteed income alone (Stadelmann-Steffen and Dermont 2020; Rincón, Vlandas, and Hiilamo 2022; Rincon 2023). First, it allows a direct comparison between the two prominent reform proposals within the same beneficiary sam-

ple. Second, the randomized variation in payment levels allows us to infer the effect of generosity on support and on willingness to participate.

3.3 Preferences for Basic Income

Research on social policy preferences has recently seen a rapid expansion in studies of attitudes toward basic income, while comparable evidence on support for job guarantees remains absent.³ Despite the central place of both proposals in debates on welfare state reform, no study has yet directly compared attitudes toward guaranteed jobs and guaranteed income.

Research on support for basic income has expanded substantially in recent years (Chrisp, Pulkka, and García 2020; Stadelmann-Steffen and Dermont 2020; Rincon 2023; Laenen 2023), while comparable counterparts for guaranteed jobs remain missing. Several ESS-based studies identify lower benefits or incomes and younger age as predictors of stronger support (Roosma and Oorschot 2020; Vlandas 2021). The same literature finds no clear gender pattern (Roosma and Oorschot 2020) or somewhat stronger support among men (Vlandas 2021; Weisstanner 2022), and points to higher support among the working class. Taken together, these findings suggest that support is likely to be stronger among more disadvantaged respondents within the unemployed population. At the same time, because the existing evidence is almost entirely limited to basic income, it remains unclear whether the same gradients extend to guaranteed jobs and, crucially, whether they also shape willingness to accept a guaranteed job offer.

3.4 Theoretical Expectations

The preceding literature points to a gap, which this study addresses by examining three questions: how support for the two policies compares, how generosity shapes that support, and which groups are most supportive and willing to accept a guaranteed job. This section derives the corresponding expectations.

Expectation 1: Relative Support for Guaranteed Jobs and Guaranteed Income Among unemployed workers, I expect support for guaranteed jobs to exceed support for guaranteed income. A first reason is conditionality. Existing research shows that support for social policy is generally higher when benefits are tied to work or participation rather than provided unconditionally (Buß,

3. Langer et al. (2023) report strong support for publicly funded job programs in a non-representative convenience sample of 400 respondents across Europe.

Ebbinghaus, and Naumann 2017; Rincón, Vlandas, and Hiilamo 2022; Laenen, Van Hootegeem, and Rossetti 2023). Guaranteed jobs align with this reciprocity logic, whereas guaranteed income suspends it. A second reason is that guaranteed jobs can satisfy both material and nonmaterial motives. They provide earnings, but also the social recognition and collective purpose associated with paid employment, as emphasized in Jahoda's account of the latent functions of work (Jahoda 1984). A third reason follows from the policy package studied here: guaranteed income is presented as replacing existing benefits, whereas guaranteed jobs add a further layer of protection. This should tilt support toward guaranteed jobs. At the same time, I do not expect the two proposals to be strictly oppositional. Both address economic insecurity, so many respondents may view them as different instruments for a shared goal rather than as mutually exclusive alternatives.

Expectation 2: The Effect of Generosity I expect support for both guaranteed jobs and guaranteed income to rise with generosity. Higher payments increase the material value of each scheme and make the policy offer more attractive relative to the status quo. This expectation should be especially strong in a beneficiary sample, where the marginal value of additional income is likely to be high. The design literature on basic income points in the same direction, showing that more generous schemes attract stronger support (Laenen 2023). For guaranteed jobs, I further expect a pronounced response when the offered wage moves clearly above current unemployment benefits. At that point, the scheme no longer offers only work and social inclusion, but also a visible monetary gain relative to non-employment. This should matter even more for willingness to accept a guaranteed job than for general support. For guaranteed income, the effect of generosity should also be positive, though potentially more linear because the scheme directly raises disposable income without requiring a corresponding decision to work.

Expectation 3: Subgroup Differences in Support and Job Acceptance I expect support for both policies to be stronger among more disadvantaged unemployed workers. Respondents with poorer health, lower unemployment benefits, lower occupational prestige, and more negative labor market experiences face greater economic insecurity and weaker outside options. For them, both guaranteed jobs and guaranteed income should be more valuable as protection against income loss and labor market exclusion. I also expect experienced discrimination and stigma to be associated with stronger support, because both may heighten demand for policies that provide income security and, in the case of guaranteed jobs, an institutional route back into socially recognized work. These expectations follow directly from prior findings on basic income, but they have not yet been tested for guaranteed jobs or in a setting that compares both policies side by side.

For willingness to accept a guaranteed job, I expect an even clearer gradient by disadvantage. Respondents with lower benefits and lower occupational prestige have less to lose from moving into a publicly funded job and more to gain from the wage floor and employment relationship. Respondents who experienced discrimination may also value the job guarantee as a secure alternative to an exclusionary labor market. Unemployment duration is theoretically more ambiguous. Longer unemployment may increase the value of income support, but it may also weaken attachment to paid employment and reduce willingness to accept a guaranteed job. I therefore expect duration to be less clearly related to support for guaranteed income than to support for guaranteed jobs or willingness to take up a job offer.

4. RESEARCH DESIGN

This section provides an overview of the data and sample (Section 4.1), outcomes and treatment (Section 4.2), experimental design (Section 4.3), and approaches to identification (Section 4.4) and inference (Section 4.5).

Austria offers a well-suited setting for this study for several reasons. It combines a Bismarckian, earnings-related unemployment insurance system with active labor market policy administered through the Public Employment Service (AMS), making it representative of the Continental European welfare state model in which both guaranteed jobs and guaranteed income have become widely debated policy proposals. Popular support for basic income stood at around 46 percent in 2016, in line with levels in Germany and France (Vlandas 2019; Roosma and Oorschot 2020).

4.1 Data

To reach a large, representative sample of the hard-to-reach sub-population, the survey placed considerable emphasis on inclusiveness and representativeness. The sampling relied on probability sampling based on pre-stratified, non-clustered random selection by municipality, including random digit dialing and repeated contact attempts. The survey was administered via computer assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) in five languages to reach non-German speakers. The survey relied on a self-reported measure of non-employment that captures both registered and non-registered job seekers. Taken together, these efforts resulted in a response rate of 17 percent among eligible participants. Further details are provided in Appendix B. Data collection for the survey took place between May and July 2021, a period during which the labor market recovered

from preceding Covid-induced lockdowns. Welfare attitudes appear to have remained broadly stable during the pandemic period (Ebbinghaus, Lehner, and Naumann 2022).⁴

The final estimation sample comprises 1,215 respondents (Appendix Table A1). Of those, around half have a migration background and 30 percent are women. The average age is around 40 years and a respondent has spent an average of 10–11 weeks in unemployment. Around 25 percent have been unemployed for 1 year or longer. This compares to 47 percent women, 1/3 with foreign citizenship, and an average of 26 weeks in unemployment among registered unemployed workers during the same period (AMS 2021).⁵ Most variables have no missing observations and no variable has more than 7 percent of missing observations. To adjust for educational attainment and the duration of the unemployment spell, weights were created on the basis of the Microcensus 2020 and administrative records of the Public Employment Service. Appendix Table A1 shows only marginal differences between the unweighted and weighted samples except accounting for a shortfall in women respondents. I conducted the analysis on the unweighted sample, as the random assignment took place on a simple randomization procedure without pre-stratification.

4.2 Outcomes and Treatment

I estimated the effect of generosity on support for each scheme and willingness to participate in a guaranteed job scheme. These schemes' characteristics are described in Table 1 and the outcomes as well as the covariates are defined in Appendix Table A2. All outcomes and covariates are based on the survey described above. Within the survey, the outcomes were collected after the covariates except for demographic characteristics. The complete list of survey questions corresponding to each of these outcomes and covariates is listed in Appendix Section B.2.

The three outcomes are support for guaranteed jobs, support for guaranteed income, and willingness to accept a job under the scheme. Each outcome is measured with a binary indicator that equals one if the respondent supports the scheme or would accept the job, and zero otherwise.⁶ The proposed schemes (Table 1) echo existing pilot schemes (Verho, Hämäläinen, and Kanninen 2022; Kasy and Lehner 2026a; Bohmann et al. 2025) and policy proposals (Standing 2017, Van Parijs and Vanderborght 2017, Tcherneva 2020, UN Special Rapporteur Olivier De Schutter

4. A scientific use file of the data is publicly available in the Austrian Social Science Data Archive (Schönherr and Lehner 2022) at <https://data.aussda.at/dataset.xhtml?persistentId=doi:10.11587/XJNNYA>.

5. Note that the sample definitions differ as the survey includes those not registered with the PES and those self-employed without work.

6. Using a binary measure avoids treating ordinal response scales as continuous variables.

2023). The proposed design of the guaranteed income scheme also closely matches the question on support for basic income from the European Social Survey (ESS 2016).⁷

Regarding guaranteed jobs, respondents were introduced to a hypothetical scheme that offered a publicly funded job to anyone unemployed for longer than one year, which eligible participants could choose to accept voluntarily. Jobs would involve local non-profit activities and be paid a collectively bargained minimum wage of €1,000, €1,500, or €2,000 net monthly per randomized group. Participants were asked whether they would support or oppose such a scheme and whether they would accept a job under the scheme.

Regarding guaranteed income, respondents were introduced to a hypothetical scheme paying a fixed amount of €1,000, €1,500, or €2,000 net monthly from the state per randomized group. The recipient would have to do nothing in return and receive the amount regardless of whether they would work or had any other income or assets. The scheme, however, would replace other social benefits currently in place.

Table 1: Scheme Characteristics

Dimension	Guaranteed job	Guaranteed income
Treatment		
Generosity	€1,000, €1,500, or €2,000 ^a net per month	€1,000, €1,500, or €2,000 net per month
Constant features		
Conditionality	Work ^b	None
Eligibility	> 1 year unemployed	Everyone
Existing benefits	Supplementary	Substitute ^c

^a In the survey, the wage is defined as “a collectively-bargained minimum wage.”

^b Work is defined as “in non-profit activities in the municipality or district.”

^c The description of guaranteed income in the survey indicates that “there would no longer be any social benefits as there are now.”

Accordingly, the key difference between guaranteed jobs and guaranteed income, as proposed in the survey questions, lies in their conditionality, eligibility criteria, and effect on existing benefits: guaranteed jobs require work in local non-profit activities and are available to anyone unemployed for more than a year. In contrast, guaranteed income does not require work and has no other conditionality attached⁸ and is paid to everyone irrespective of employment status or in-

7. One may think that respondents are impacted by the order of questions on guaranteed jobs and guaranteed income, which is why the order of the questions regarding support for each policy was randomized. The question on willingness to accept a guaranteed job was asked immediately following the question on support for guaranteed jobs.

8. Because guaranteed income is implemented through automatic enrollment, no conditionality is attached. By contrast, guaranteed jobs involve a work requirement, making voluntary participation essential.

come. While guaranteed income replaces existing social benefits, guaranteed jobs add an extra layer to the social safety net. The comparison between guaranteed jobs and guaranteed income reveals several distinctions that likely influence support levels and, in the current design, can only be assessed collectively to document support for the most prominent policy packages.⁹

For comparison, the generosity level of €1,000 amounted to about the average level of monthly unemployment benefits (Statistics Austria, 2024) well below the minimum wage of any sector. The generosity level of €1,500 was at about the level of the 10th percentile, which amounts to 2/3 of the median wage and corresponds to a low-wage earner at around the minimum wage. By comparison, the generosity level of €2,000 was at about the level of the 33rd percentile in the wage distribution (Statistics Austria, 2024). For easier contextualization, I refer to the generosity levels as unemployment benefits, low wage, and living wage.

Covariates include unemployment duration in weeks, age in years, and dummy indicators for gender and migration background. For unemployment benefits reported in income brackets, I assigned the mean of each bracket to the respective observation to obtain a continuous variable. I then took logs to limit the influence of outliers in the regression analysis and to allow for an interpretation of coefficients in percentage terms. For other covariates, I constructed indices including health status (-), occupational prestige, experienced discrimination, and stigma awareness. These indices are equally weighted combinations of the responses to the respective survey scales. To enable a compact presentation of our results in Section 5, I normalized the indices, such that higher values correspond to “better” outcomes (health status with a flipped sign is marked by (-) in the subsequent tables and figures), and such that the range of these variables is the interval [0, 1]; cf. Appendix Table A2.

4.3 Experiment Design

The experimental design rests on the varying generosity levels of the schemes. The difference in generosity amounts to €500 per group, where Group 1 was told that the guaranteed jobs and guaranteed income schemes each pay €1,000, Group 2 €1,500, and Group 3 €2,000 per month.

Assignment to these groups was randomized for each participant at the time of the survey data collection (Muralidharan, Romero, and Wüthrich 2025). Summarizing the resulting assignment,

9. While the absence of explicit fiscal trade offs to finance social policy has been shown to capture unconstrained preferences (Bremer and Bürgisser 2023), such trade offs have been found not to affect low-income groups (Naumann 2018).

Table 2 shows the covariate means per group and the corresponding p-values for a joint test of significance. Confirming that the procedure worked as intended, the available covariates are balanced across groups with one exception: women are significantly less represented in Group 1 compared to Groups 2 and 3.

Table 2: Balance Table by Group, Unweighted

	Unemployment benefits level	Low wage	Living wage	p-value
Health status (-)	0.19	0.19	0.20	0.87
Unemployment duration	10.43	10.71	10.14	0.75
Unemployment benefits	918.64	905.83	909.65	0.84
Occupational prestige	0.34	0.34	0.34	0.93
Discrimination	0.11	0.13	0.12	0.40
Stigma	0.36	0.38	0.39	0.20
Women	0.46	0.56	0.53	0.02
Age	40.20	41.31	40.46	0.39
Migration background	0.25	0.31	0.30	0.19
N	399	400	416	

4.4 Identification Approach

Research question one is identified by comparing support for guaranteed jobs and guaranteed income. The questions were asked in randomized order and controlling for question order does not affect the results. Whether support for the two policies is complementary or substitutive is addressed descriptively through cross-tabulations of stated support.

Second, the causal effects of policy generosity on support and job acceptance in research question two are identified through randomized assignment to the three groups.¹⁰ The causal estimand is therefore nonparametric and does not depend on any functional form. The results for policy support can be interpreted as intention-to-treat (ITT) generalizable to the entire population in the sample.

The third question, which types of unemployed workers are most supportive and most willing to accept a guaranteed job, cannot be answered experimentally, as respondents are not randomized into socio-economic circumstances or labor market histories. This part of the analysis is instead based on a selection-on-observables approach and should be interpreted as correlational.

10. Additionally, I control for the share of women to adjust for the small imbalance in group assignment and other variables to increase precision.

Treatment group fixed effects are included throughout to partial out variation attributable to the randomized generosity levels, ensuring that individual-level coefficients reflect within-group variation. As a result, the observational estimates are not confounded by the experimental manipulation.

4.5 Inference

Identification relies on random assignment, which allows me to assess the causal effect of generosity by comparing means across the three groups:

$$\Delta_j = \bar{Y}_j - \bar{Y}_1, \quad j \in \{2, 3\} \quad (1)$$

where $\bar{Y}_1$ denotes the mean outcome in the unemployment-benefits group (the reference category), and $\bar{Y}_2$ and $\bar{Y}_3$ denote the means in the low-wage and living-wage groups, respectively. This tests the null hypothesis that treatment assignment had no effect, that is, $Y_i^j = Y_i^1$ for all respondents i , groups j , and potential outcomes Y_i^j .

To examine whether support for the two policies is complementary or substitutive, and to explore the joint distribution of support and willingness to accept a guaranteed job, I cross-tabulate the binary outcomes across treatment groups.

I use covariate-adjusted logistic regressions for two purposes: First, to increase precision in the treatment effect estimates on research question two. Second, to examine individual-level determinants of support and job acceptance to answer research question three. Logistic regressions are well suited for binary outcomes, as they model the probability of support or take-up, while constraining predicted values to the unit interval. Both uses share the following specification:

$$\log \left(\frac{\Pr(Y_i = 1)}{1 - \Pr(Y_i = 1)} \right) = \beta_0 + \beta_1 + \dots + \beta_k + \alpha_{\text{group}} + \mathbf{X}_i' \gamma \quad (2)$$

where $\beta_1 \dots \beta_k$ are the independent variables of interest (health status, unemployment duration, unemployment benefits, occupational prestige, discrimination, and stigma), α_{group} are treatment group fixed effects, and $\mathbf{X}_i$ is a vector of demographic controls. For the treatment effect specifications, the β coefficients capture the effect of the low-wage and living-wage groups relative to the unemployment-benefits group (the reference category). For the heterogeneity analysis, the same

equation is estimated with the β coefficients capturing individual-level predictors of support and take-up. I transform log odds into odds ratios in the text to facilitate interpretation. To compare the relative magnitude of predictors in the take-up analysis, I additionally report standardized coefficients.

5. FINDINGS

The results in Section 5 provide causal evidence on the first two research questions. I first compare respondents' support for guaranteed jobs and guaranteed income, and estimate how experimentally varied generosity affects this support (Section 5.1). I then examine whether support for the two policies is complementary or oppositional (Section 5.2). Finally, I study the causal effect of generosity on respondents' willingness to accept jobs offered under a job guarantee scheme (Section 5.3). Section 6 complements this analysis by examining determinants of support and job acceptance using non-experimental evidence to answer the third research question.

5.1 Support for Guaranteed Jobs and Guaranteed Income

Figure 1 shows support for guaranteed jobs and guaranteed income by generosity. The red bars (left-hand side) represent the percentage of respondents who support guaranteed jobs, and the blue bars (right-hand side) represent the percentage of respondents who support guaranteed income. The black error bars represent 95 percent confidence intervals.

Table 3 shows the effects of the low-wage treatment and the living-wage treatment compared to the unemployment-benefits level treatment, which is used as the control group. Coefficients of the logistic regressions show log odds, which are transformed into odds ratios in the text below for easier interpretation. Specifications (1) and (4) show the baseline specification for guaranteed jobs and guaranteed income, respectively. Specifications (2) and (5) control for demographic characteristics, further complemented with socio-economic and personal experience controls in specifications (3) and (6).

First, the results indicate widespread support for both guaranteed jobs and guaranteed income. Support is high across all generosity levels. On average, support amounts to 84 percent for guaranteed jobs and 62 percent for guaranteed income (Figure 1).¹¹ At any generosity level, support

11. Support for guaranteed income closely matches support among unemployed workers in Austria five years prior,

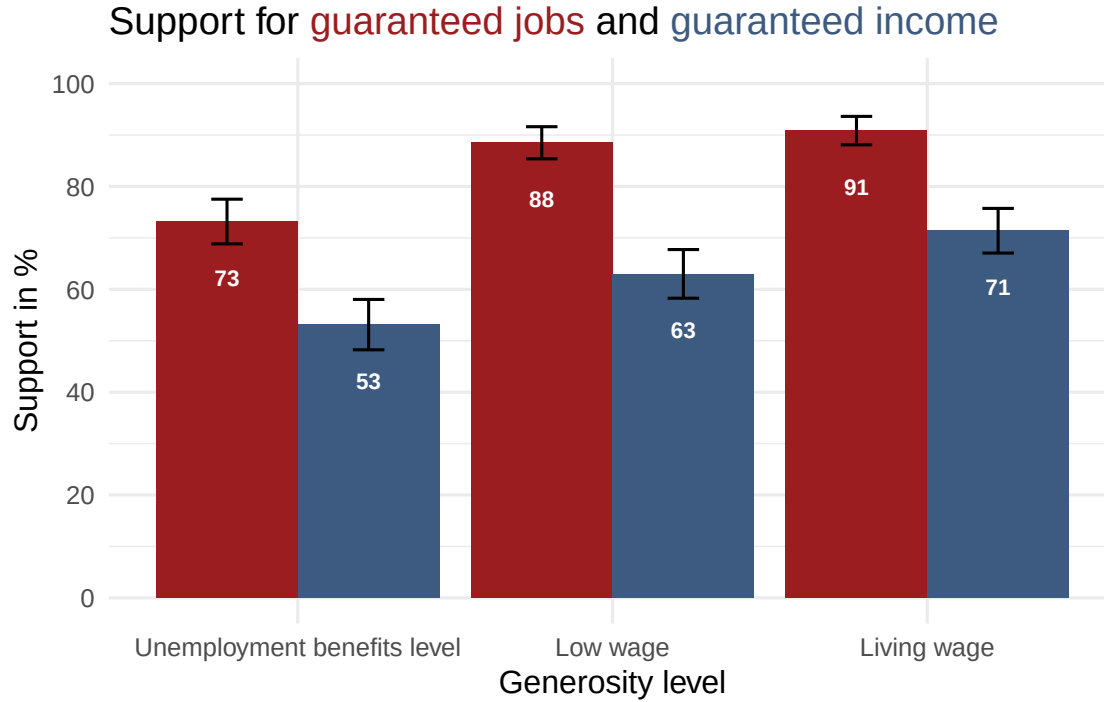
for guaranteed jobs exceeds support for guaranteed income, with an average gap of 22 percentage points. Only at the living-wage level does support for guaranteed income roughly match support for guaranteed jobs at the unemployment-benefits level.

Second, support for both schemes increases with higher generosity. Support for guaranteed jobs rises from 73 percent at the unemployment-benefits level to 88 percent at the low-wage level and 91 percent at the living-wage level. Support for guaranteed income increases from 53 percent to 63 percent and 71 percent, respectively. Moving from the unemployment-benefits level to the low-wage level increases support by 15 percentage points for guaranteed jobs and 10 percentage points for guaranteed income. At the living-wage level, both schemes see an 18 percentage point increase relative to the unemployment-benefits level. These differences are statistically significant.

Multivariate analyses with covariate adjustment confirm the robustness of these patterns (Table 3). Higher generosity significantly increases support for both policies across all specifications. The estimated effects are of similar magnitude to those observed in the mean comparisons. Support for guaranteed income rises linearly with every €500 increment in generosity. By contrast, support for guaranteed jobs experiences a substantial boost from unemployment benefits to the low-wage level and only a smaller additional boost when increasing generosity further to the living-wage level. Including demographic, socio-economic, and personal experience controls leaves the estimated treatment effects largely unchanged and confirms their robustness.

based on a similarly phrased question in wave 8 of the 2016 European Social Survey (Vlandas 2019). The same study reports 56 percent support among those who had experienced unemployment at some point during the previous five years and 46 percent in the general population, which is consistent with findings in Roosma and Oorschot (2020).

Figure 1: Support for Guaranteed Jobs and Guaranteed Income



Note: The red bars (left-hand side) represent the percentage of respondents who support guaranteed jobs, and the blue bars (right-hand side) represent the percentage of respondents who support guaranteed income. The black error bars represent confidence intervals at the 95 percent level. Percentages within each group do not sum up to 100 as responses for “I don’t know” and “No response” are omitted.

Table 3: Support for Guaranteed Jobs and Guaranteed Income

	Guaranteed jobs			Guaranteed income		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Low-wage	1.04*** (0.00)	1.02*** (0.01)	1.13*** (0.04)	0.41*** (0.00)	0.40*** (0.01)	0.39*** (0.06)
Living-wage	1.29*** (0.00)	1.27*** (0.01)	1.60*** (0.02)	0.79*** (0.00)	0.79*** (0.01)	0.86*** (0.05)
N	1215	1215	1061	1215	1215	1061
Demographic controls		x	x		x	x
Socio-economic controls			x			x
Personal experience controls			x			x
R2	0.05	0.05	0.14	0.02	0.02	0.06

Note: Robust standard errors are clustered at the treatment group level: + $p < 0.1$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$. Demographic controls include gender, age, and migration background. Socio-economic controls include unemployment benefits, occupational prestige, and unemployment duration. Personal experience controls include experienced discrimination and stigma awareness. Treatment groups refer to a monthly payment of €1,000, €1,500, and €2,000.

5.2 Complementary or Oppositional Public Support

Let us now explore whether support for guaranteed jobs or guaranteed income constitutes opposing or complementary preferences. Table 4 presents a cross-tabulation of support for guaranteed jobs or guaranteed income as a share of responses per generosity level.

A majority of respondents support both policies, indicating a complementary rather than oppositional sentiment. This trend of mutual support strengthens progressively with higher generosity levels, suggesting mutually reinforcing support among respondents.

The second-largest group consists of respondents who show support for guaranteed jobs but not for guaranteed income. Their share remains relatively constant at 26 percent for the unemployment benefits generosity level, 29 percent for the low-wage generosity level, and slightly lower at 21 percent for the living-wage generosity level.

Third in size is the group that does not support either policy. While their share amounts to 21 percent at the level of unemployment benefits, it drops markedly to around 8 percent with higher generosity levels. The increase from the low-wage to living-wage barely reduces the share of this group, indicating a threshold beyond which further increases in generosity do not substantially diminish the core opposition against the policies.

A minimal subset of the cohort exhibits support for guaranteed income while withholding support for guaranteed jobs, with their proportion dwindling from 6 percent at the lowest generosity to 1 percent at the highest.

Overall, the results show that increasing generosity weakens opposition among unemployed workers, with core opposition to any policy remaining small and relatively stable, oscillating around 8 percent .

Table 4: Support Across Pay Levels

		UB level		Support for guaranteed income					
		Yes	No	Yes	No		Yes	No	
Support for guaranteed jobs	Yes	46.9	25.3	Yes	60.0	28.2	Yes	70.0	20.2
	No	5.5	19.5	No	2.5	7.5	No	1.2	7.5

Note: Percentages within each group do not sum up to 100 as responses for “I don’t know” and “No response” are omitted. UB level refers to the unemployment benefits level.

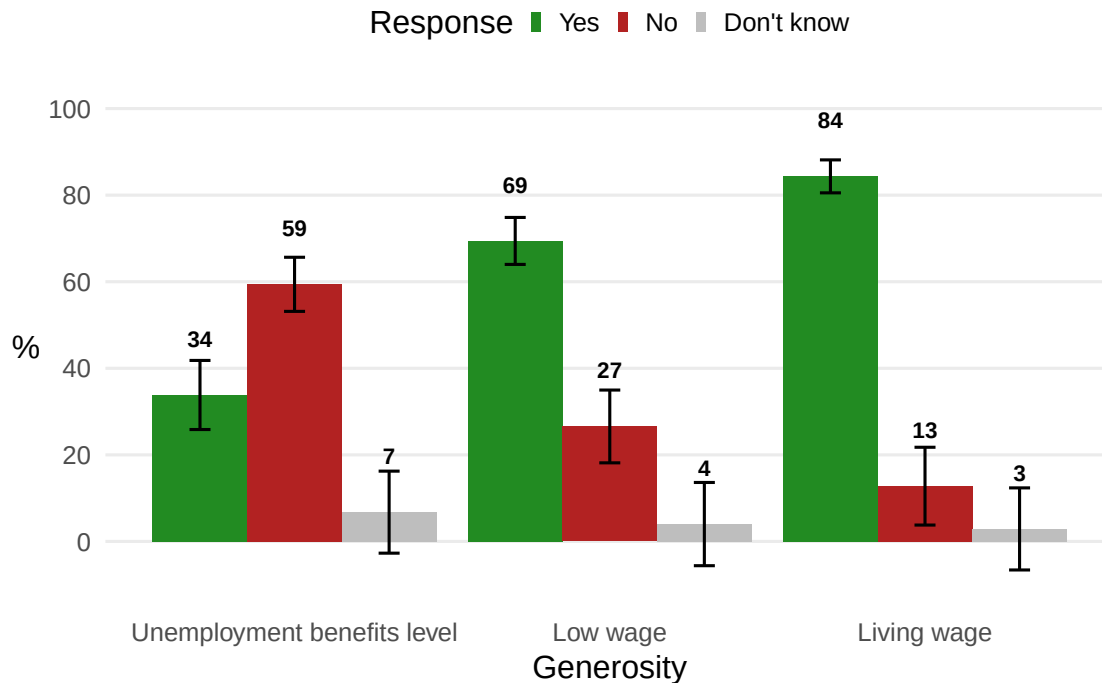
5.3 Willingness to Accept a Guaranteed Job

Figure 2 illustrates the willingness to accept a job under a job guarantee at varying generosity levels. The bars represent percentages of respondents: green for those willing to accept a guaranteed job, red for those unwilling to accept it, and grey for those who are unsure. The black error bars represent 95 percent confidence intervals.

First, the willingness to accept a job under the scheme rises as higher amounts are offered. At the lowest generosity level, the majority of respondents indicated that they would not accept such a job, compared to a third who would accept a job. When the generosity increased by €500, the pattern of responses shifted markedly, with affirmative responses surging to just under three-quarters and negative responses diminishing to around one-quarter. At the living-wage, the proportion of affirmative responses reached its peak, surpassing three-quarters, whereas the negative responses decreased further. Interestingly, the proportion of uncertain responses remained relatively stable across the different generosity levels, indicating a persistent share of uncertain respondents unaffected by generosity.

Second, the results indicate a large treatment effect at a critical threshold between the levels of unemployment benefits and the low wages, beyond which the likelihood of accepting a job under the scheme significantly increases. At this threshold, the willingness to accept a guaranteed job increases more (+40 percent) than the corresponding increase in support (+15 percent) (cf. Section 5.1). Although the level of support was already at a higher baseline (73 percent) than the willingness to accept a job (30 percent), the result conveys a large effect of the generosity level on job acceptance.

Figure 2: Willingness to Accept a Guaranteed Job



Note: The bars represent the percentages of respondents who are willing to accept a guaranteed job (green bars, left-hand side), are not willing to accept a guaranteed job (red bars, middle), and who do not know (grey, right-hand side). Observations with “No response” are omitted. The black error bars represent confidence intervals at the 95 percent level.

To explore to what degree support for and willingness to accept a guaranteed job are conditional on each other, Table 5 presents a cross-tabulation of the two outcomes by generosity level. At the lowest generosity level, the share of respondents who support guaranteed jobs but would not accept them is about 1 out of 3. The share of respondents who support and would accept a guaranteed job doubles to 2 out of 3 at the low-wage level and culminates at 82.5 percent at the living-wage level. As would be expected, hardly anyone would accept a guaranteed job while not supporting the policy, though the share rises from 0.8 percent at the lowest generosity to 1.7 percent at the highest generosity. The results illustrate that the vast majority of respondents who support guaranteed jobs would also accept a guaranteed job if the generosity was sufficient.

Table 5: Job Guarantee Support and Acceptance Across Pay Levels

	Willingness to accept a guaranteed job								
	UB level			Low wage			Living wage		
		Yes	No		Yes	No		Yes	No
Support for guaranteed jobs	Yes	33.1	34.6	Yes	68.2	16.2	Yes	82.5	6.2
	No	0.8	24.1	No	1.0	9.0	No	1.7	6.2

Note: Percentages within each group do not sum up to 100 as responses for “I don’t know” and “No response” are omitted. UB level refers to the unemployment benefits level.

6. WHO SUPPORTS AND WHO PARTICIPATES?

This section complements the experimental findings with a non-experimental analysis to address the third research question: which types of unemployed workers are supportive of each policy and willing to accept a guaranteed job. Specifically, I examine the individual-level determinants of support for each policy (Section 6.1), identify group characteristics of supporters and opponents (Section 6.2), and analyze the determinants of willingness to accept a guaranteed job (Section 6.3).

6.1 Determinants of Support

Table 6 presents individual-level determinants of support for guaranteed jobs and guaranteed income with treatment-group fixed effects. Logistic regressions estimated the likelihood of supporting either policy on a binary variable with a gradually increasing number of covariates from equations 1–3 and 4–6. The effect of each treatment group remains significantly positive with its magnitude unaffected by the set of covariates.

For guaranteed jobs, people with poorer health show a higher probability of support. The duration of unemployment has a consistently negative association, indicating that longer periods of unemployment are linked to lower support for guaranteed jobs. Notably, higher unemployment benefits are connected to lower support. Discrimination experiences in the labor market are positively associated with support. Higher occupational prestige is generally associated with lower support though not statistically significant.

For guaranteed income, people with poorer health are more supportive. The duration of unemployment is not significantly associated with support across the specifications. The level of actual unemployment benefits received and occupational prestige as well as experienced job discrimina-

tion show negative but not significant associations.

Among demographic covariates, only gender shows significant associations. Women are more likely to support guaranteed jobs and less likely to support guaranteed income. Age tends to correspond with lower support for either policy, whereas having a migration background shows no association with support for guaranteed jobs but a positive association with support for guaranteed income.

The results underscore different dimensions of beneficiaries' support for guaranteed jobs versus guaranteed income. Both policies see an uptick in support from people with poorer health, suggesting that even among primary beneficiaries, those potentially benefiting most show the strongest support. The duration of unemployment has a nuanced association: It is linked to reduced support for guaranteed jobs while there is no link with the sentiment toward guaranteed income, potentially reflecting a waning attachment to the labor market with prolonged unemployment spells. Remarkably, the level of unemployment benefits is inversely associated with support for guaranteed jobs, indicating that those with lower previous earnings are more inclined toward the program. The analysis also highlights a threshold effect: unemployed workers receiving less than €1,000 in unemployment benefits per month show a marked preference for guaranteed jobs, while the preference toward guaranteed income becomes noticeable below €450 per month. The result on occupational prestige suggests that those who used to have jobs with higher prestige may lean away from supporting such programs, though at non-significant levels. Furthermore, occupational prestige is partially accounted for by controlling for the benefit level, which is based on previous earnings and correlates strongly with occupational prestige. Discrimination experiences go hand-in-hand with support for guaranteed jobs and guaranteed income. These patterns suggest that overall more disadvantaged unemployed workers are more likely to support either policy. Longer unemployment spells, as an exception, are associated with a lower likelihood of supporting guaranteed jobs, suggesting a waning attachment to the labor market the longer people are unemployed.¹²

12. It is well established that unemployment duration increases lethargy over time, which results in a waning desire to return to paid employment as people grow more accustomed to their situation (Jahoda 1984). At the same time, unemployment duration may also correlate with general disadvantage, which could reduce support for guaranteed jobs.

Table 6: Support for Guaranteed Jobs and Guaranteed Income

	Guaranteed jobs			Guaranteed income		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Health status (-)		2.46*	2.44*		1.36**	1.45**
		(1.12)	(1.06)		(0.51)	(0.47)
Unemployment duration		-0.02+	-0.02+		0.01	0.02
		(0.01)	(0.01)		(0.02)	(0.02)
Unemployment benefits		-0.58***	-0.45***		-0.12	-0.15
		(0.08)	(0.08)		(0.19)	(0.20)
Occupational prestige		-1.26	-1.26		-0.72	-0.64
		(1.51)	(1.50)		(0.89)	(1.00)
Discrimination	2.04***	0.84	1.00+	1.25*	0.37	0.39
	(0.23)	(0.60)	(0.60)	(0.50)	(0.66)	(0.61)
N	1215	1109	1109	1215	1109	1109
Group fixed effects	x	x	x	x	x	x
Demographic controls			x			x
R2	0.069	0.123	0.127	0.03	0.046	0.052

Note: Robust standard errors are clustered at the treatment group level: + $p < 0.1$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$. Demographic controls include gender, age, and migration background. Treatment groups refer to a monthly payment of € 1,000, €1,500, and €2,000.

6.2 Identifying Supporters and Opponents

Who makes up the approximate quarter supporting guaranteed jobs while opposing guaranteed income? To address this question, I classify respondents into four mutually exclusive groups based on their stated support for or opposition to each policy. The columns in Table 7 correspond to all possible combinations of support and opposition across the two policies. The table reports group means for continuous variables and group shares for binary variables.

Supporters of guaranteed jobs who oppose guaranteed income have shorter unemployment spells than others. In other aspects, such as health, occupational prestige of the previous job, experienced discrimination, and stigma awareness, their characteristics are relatively similar to other groups. Their average unemployment benefits match those who support both policies. They are more likely women compared to those who oppose guaranteed jobs but align closely with the gender distribution of those who support both policies.

Conversely, the small group opposing guaranteed jobs while favoring guaranteed income experiences longer unemployment spells than others, yet they face less stigma from unemployment. Furthermore, the comparison indicates that support for guaranteed income is less common among women, consistent with results based on the ESS (Weisstanner 2022).

Table 7: Characteristics of Support Groups: Means and Shares by Policy Support

	For JG & BI	For JG, Against BI	Against JG, For BI	Against JG & BI
Health status (-)	0.22	0.17	0.15	0.11
Unemployment duration	10.88	8.50	16.24	10.49
Unemployment benefits	897.47	897.88	947.64	1012.51
Occupational prestige	0.32	0.35	0.37	0.41
Discrimination	0.15	0.10	0.06	0.06
Stigma	0.42	0.32	0.28	0.33
Women	0.52	0.56	0.32	0.46
Age	40.66	40.24	42.89	40.09
Migration background	0.31	0.24	0.35	0.24
N	718	298	37	139

Note: Respondents are classified into four mutually exclusive groups based on their stated support for or opposition to each policy. The columns thus reflect all possible combinations of support and opposition across the two policies. For continuous variables (health status, unemployment duration, unemployment benefits, occupational prestige, discrimination, stigma, and age), cells report group means. For binary indicators (gender and migration background), cells report the share of respondents within each group for whom the indicator equals one. Health status is coded such that higher values indicate worse self-reported health. Unemployment benefits are reported in euros per month. Occupational prestige is a standardized index based on the respondent's last held occupation. Discrimination is a standardized index based on the respondent's experienced labor market discrimination. Stigma is a standardized index based on the respondent's stigma awareness. Shares for gender and migration background do not sum to 100 within groups as "I don't know" and "No response" categories are omitted. JG = job guarantee; BI = basic income.

To understand the profile of those consistently opposed to both guaranteed jobs and guaranteed income, even at low-wage and living-wage generosity, I exclude those in the unemployment-benefits group and again cross-tabulate the four possible combinations of support and opposition across the two policies. Table 8 reports group means for continuous variables and group shares for binary variables.

The respondents who consistently oppose both guaranteed jobs and guaranteed income, even at low-wage and living-wage generosity, are generally better off. They are in better health and hold a superior socio-economic position compared to other groups, characterized by shorter unemployment durations, higher unemployment benefits, and greater occupational prestige in their previous job. They report having experienced less discrimination in the labor market and tend to experience unemployment as less stigmatizing. Demographically, they are comparatively similar to others.

Table 8: Characteristics of Support Groups Among Low-wage and Living-wage Treatment Groups: Means and Shares by Policy Support

	For JG & BI	For JG, Against BI	Against JG, For BI	Against JG & BI
Health status (-)	0.22	0.16	0.12	0.11
Unemployment duration	11.62	7.59	14.80	7.69
Unemployment benefits	899.21	889.91	914.79	1047.79
Occupational prestige	0.32	0.35	0.38	0.53
Discrimination	0.14	0.12	0.02	0.06
Stigma	0.43	0.31	0.26	0.24
Women	0.53	0.60	0.47	0.48
Age	40.69	40.91	45.13	40.26
Migration background	0.32	0.26	0.27	0.34
N	531	197	15	61

Note: This table replicates the structure of Table 7 but restricts the sample to respondents assigned to the low-wage and living-wage treatment groups, excluding those in the unemployment-benefits treatment group. Respondents are classified into four mutually exclusive groups based on their stated support for or opposition to each policy, covering all possible combinations. For continuous variables (health status, unemployment duration, unemployment benefits, occupational prestige, discrimination, stigma, and age), cells report group means. For binary indicators (gender and migration background), cells report the share of respondents within each group for whom the indicator equals one. Health status is coded such that higher values indicate worse self-reported health. Unemployment benefits are reported in euros per month. Occupational prestige is a standardized index based on the respondent's last held occupation. Discrimination is a standardized index based on the respondent's experienced labor market discrimination. Stigma is a standardized index based on the respondent's stigma awareness. Shares for gender and migration background do not sum to 100 within groups as "I don't know" and "No response" categories are omitted. JG = job guarantee; BI = basic income.

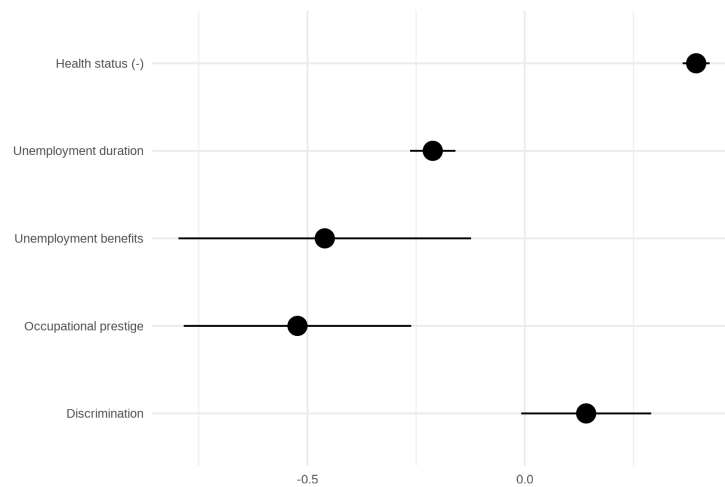
6.3 Determinants of Willingness to Accept a Guaranteed Job

Table 9 presents the determinants of willingness to accept a guaranteed job based on socio-economic circumstances and past labor market experiences with treatment-group fixed effects. Logistic regressions estimated the association between the willingness to accept a job under the job guaranteed with a gradually increasing number of covariates from equations 1–4. Standardized coefficients are shown in equation (5) and Figure 3 . As for support, the effect of each treatment group on willingness to accept a guaranteed job remains significantly positive, with its magnitude unaffected by the set of controls.

Across determinants, disadvantaged respondents, facing weaker outside options, emerge as those with a higher willingness to accept a guaranteed job. The one exception is unemployment duration, which is negatively associated with willingness to accept. Longer unemployment may reduce the desire to return to paid employment as individuals grow accustomed to non-employment over time. At the same time, duration may be susceptible to reverse causality: those unwilling or unable to take up a guaranteed job may remain unemployed longer. Turning to further determinants, health emerges as a pivotal factor, with a poorer condition markedly increasing the likeli-

hood of accepting a guaranteed job. Second, people on higher unemployment benefits show significantly less willingness to accept across the specifications, and vice versa. Third, occupational prestige negatively correlates with the willingness to accept guaranteed jobs, indicating a preference for maintaining social and professional status over the security offered by such programs. Fourth, experienced discrimination shows a positive and statistically significant association that weakens when controlling for socio-economic and demographic characteristics. This reduction in significance suggests that, while discrimination experiences are associated with greater willingness to accept guaranteed jobs, the association is partly accounted for by socioeconomic and demographic characteristics. Comparing the relative importance with standardized coefficients reveals occupational prestige and unemployment benefits as the strongest predictors, followed by health, unemployment duration, and experienced discrimination (Figure 3 and Table 9, equation (5)).

Figure 3: Willingness to Accept a Guaranteed Job



Note: The figure shows standardized coefficients controlled for group fixed effects and demographic characteristics. Confidence intervals are at the 95 percent level. The figure corresponds to equation (5) in Table 9.

Table 9: Willingness to Accept a Guaranteed Job

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Health status (-)		1.93*** (0.19)	2.02*** (0.10)	2.01*** (0.08)	0.39*** (0.02)
Unemployment duration			-0.02*** (0.00)	-0.02*** (0.00)	-0.21*** (0.03)
Unemployment benefits			-1.17** (0.40)	-1.14** (0.43)	-0.46** (0.17)
Occupational prestige			-2.67*** (0.55)	-2.55*** (0.65)	-0.52*** (0.13)
Discrimination	1.71*** (0.24)	0.86*** (0.23)	0.60* (0.30)	0.64+ (0.34)	0.14+ (0.08)
N	1215	1213	1109	1109	1109
Group fixed effects	x	x	x	x	x
Demographic controls				x	x
R2	0.165	0.178	0.261	0.265	0.265

Note: Robust standard errors are clustered at the treatment group level: + $p < 0.1$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$. Demographic controls include gender, age, and migration background. Treatment groups refer to a monthly payment of €1,000, €1,500, and €2,000.

7. CONCLUSION

The study addressed three related questions about unemployed workers' views of guaranteed jobs and guaranteed income. First, support is broad for both policies, though consistently stronger for guaranteed jobs, and the two policies are more often viewed as complementary than as rivals. Second, experimentally increasing generosity raises support for both schemes and sharply increases willingness to accept a guaranteed job once pay moves just above average unemployment benefits. Third, analyses of determinants show that support and job acceptance are concentrated among more disadvantaged respondents, whereas a small socio-economically advantaged minority remains opposed to both policies regardless of generosity. Together, the findings suggest that guaranteed jobs and guaranteed income are best understood not as competing alternatives but as complementary strategies for strengthening the welfare state in the twenty-first century.

As Europe expands pilot programs for guaranteed jobs and guaranteed income, with support from the European Union, understanding support for these policies becomes increasingly important. This also opens scope for further research, in particular on how alternative policy designs shape support using factorial survey designs, how support varies across welfare state models, how correcting misperceptions and framing policies differently affects responses, and how support varies across diverse beneficiary groups and over their life course. Advancing this agenda should help

improving our theoretical understanding of welfare state support. Beyond academic interest, these questions matter for the design and implementation of social policy. This study shows that guaranteed jobs and guaranteed income can be understood as complementary, rather than opposing, measures for strengthening the welfare state of the twenty-first century.

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A. RESEARCH DESIGN

Table A1: Sample, Continuous Variables

Variable	Unweighted Mean	SD	Weighted Mean	SD	valid N
Outcomes					
Support for guaranteed jobs	0.84	0.36	0.86	0.35	1,215
Support for guaranteed income	0.63	0.48	0.65	0.48	1,215
Willingness to accept a guaranteed job	0.63	0.48	0.66	0.47	1,215
Covariates					
Health status (-)	0.19	0.20	0.20	0.20	1,213
Unemployment duration	10.43	10.75	11.01	12.94	1,215
Unemployment benefits (log)	6.75	0.40	6.70	0.40	1,177
Occupational prestige	0.34	0.21	0.28	0.23	1,136
Discrimination	0.12	0.22	0.15	0.25	1,215
Stigma	0.38	0.26	0.42	0.27	1,159
Women	0.29	0.45	0.42	0.49	1,215
Age	40.65	12.08	39.81	12.64	1,215
Migration background	0.52	0.50	0.49	0.50	1,215

Table A2: Variable Definitions

Variable	Definition
Outcomes	
Support for guaranteed jobs	Dummy variable (for/against), I don't know, no answer)
Support for guaranteed income	Dummy variable (for/against ^a)
Willingness to accept a guaranteed job	Dummy variable (yes/no, I don't know, no answer)
Covariates	
Health status (-)	Normalized index of six item scales of physical and mental health, switched sign so that a lower value means a better health status
Unemployment duration	Nr. of weeks since the start of the unemployment spell
Unemployment benefits	Level of unemployment benefits received, including other benefits, in logs
Occupational prestige	Normalized index of the Standard International Occupational Prestige Scale (SIOPS), which is based on ISCO-08 2-digit occupation categories (Treiman 1977)
Discrimination	Normalized index of the number of four potential reasons for experienced discrimination in the labor market
Stigma	Normalized index of five item scales of stigma awareness building on the IAB Panel Arbeitsmarkt und soziale Sicherung (PASS, 7th wave, 2013)
Gender	Dummy variable (woman/man)
Age	Years
Migration background	Dummy variable (yes/no)

a. The responses I don't know/no answer were excluded from the analysis.

B. SURVEY

B.1 Survey Details

Sample selection: The sampling relied on probability sampling based on pre-stratified, non-clustered random selection of people by municipality. All telephone network providers were used for sampling. Additionally, secret numbers were called through random digit dialing (RDD). For each random number, at least 3 contact attempts were made up to a maximum of 5. Within the households identified, the interviewee was selected via a screening question on their current employment status, which filtered respondents for being “without work or orders” regardless of their registration with the Public Employment Service (PES) (Appendix B.2.1). Thus, the sample relies on a self-reported measure of unemployment, which has the advantage of including registered job seekers as well as those not registered with the PES and those self-employed without work.

Survey mode: The survey was conducted via computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI). In addition to German, 10% of the interviews were conducted in Turkish, Serbo-Croatian, Hungarian, and Arabic to reach non-German speakers, which are disproportionately represented among unemployed workers (Appendix Table B1). An interview lasted 19.24 minutes on average and 18 minutes in the median.

Response rate: The survey achieved a response rate of 17% among eligible participants who answered the phone and agreed to participate in the survey (Appendix Table B2). A utilization rate of 6.8% can be calculated by adding the 10,810 people not reached to the number of conducted interviews and refusals. Comparing eligible persons (conducted interviews and refusals) to non-eligible persons (sample-neutral dropouts) yields a non-employment rate of 3% of the working-age population (>15 years) as a share of total population.

Table B1: Number of Interviews Conducted in Languages other than German

Language	Full Interview	Parts of Interview
Turkish	3	9
Serbo-Croatian	11	57
Arabic	5	8
Romanian	3	11
Hungarian	9	32
Total	31	117

Table B2: Response Rate of Addresses Used

	N	%
Conducted Interviews	1,215	2.4
Refusals	5,952	11.6
Not Reached	10,810	21.2
Sample-neutral Dropouts (no unemployed person)	33,123	64.8
N (Random Addresses)	51,100	100.0

B.2 Survey Questionnaire

Screening Question

Are you currently . . . ? [READ TO RESPONDENT]

- without work or orders and registered with the AMS [→ SURVEYED AND INCLUDED IN SAMPLE]
- without work or orders and not registered with the AMS . . . [→ SURVEYED AND INCLUDED IN SAMPLE]
- employed in short-time work [→ SURVEYED BUT NOT INCLUDED IN SAMPLE]
- employed, not in short-time work [→ SURVEYED BUT NOT INCLUDED IN SAMPLE]
- all others [→ NOT SURVEYED]

Outcomes

Support for guaranteed jobs

There is currently much discussion about a job guarantee. Anyone who has been unemployed for longer than 1 year is offered a publicly funded job. You can decide voluntarily whether you want to accept it or not. These jobs should involve non-profit activities in the municipality or district. These jobs are paid a collectively-bargained minimum wage of

- €1,000 (*Group 1*)
- €1,500 (*Group 2*)
- €2,000 (*Group 3*)

net per month from the state.

Are you for or against such a job guarantee?

1. For.
2. Against.
3. I don't know, I can't say.
4. No answer.

Willingness to accept a guaranteed job

And would you accept such a job under a job guarantee?

1. Yes.
2. No.
3. I don't know, I can't say.
4. No answer.

Support for guaranteed income

There is much discussion about an unconditional basic income. Every person living in Austria would receive

- €1,000 (*Group 1*)
- €1,500 (*Group 2*)
- €2,000 (*Group 3*)

net per month from the state, with nothing in return and regardless of whether she works, and of her income or assets. At the same time, there would no longer be any social benefits as there are now.

Are you for or against an unconditional basic income?

1. For.
2. Against.
3. I don't know, I can't say.
4. No answer.

Covariates

Health status

In the last 2 weeks, did you suffer from the following complaints: never, on a few days, on more than half of the days, or on almost every day?

	Never	On few days	On more than half of the days	Almost every day
1) Headache	1	2	3	4
2) Stomach ache	1	2	3	4
3) Problems falling asleep or sleep disturbances	1	2	3	4
4) Depressive thoughts	1	2	3	4
5) Nervousness, anxiety, and tension	1	2	3	4
6) Not being able to stop or control worries	1	2	3	4

Unemployment duration

In which month and year did you become unemployed?

Month _____

Year _____

Unemployment benefits

How much money do you have at your disposal each month during unemployment, be it from your unemployment benefit, unemployment assistance, or social benefits such as family allowance? You don't have to tell me the exact amount, an approximate figure will suffice.

(Interviewer: ask again if necessary)

1. Below €450
2. €451 - 600
3. €601 - 800
4. €801 - 1.000
5. €1.001 - 1.200
6. €1.201 - 1.400
7. €1.401 - 1.600
8. €1.601 - 1.800
9. €1.801 - 2.000
10. €2.001 - 2.200
11. €2.201 - 2.400
12. €2.401 - 2.600
13. €2.601 - 2.800
14. €2.801 - 3.000
15. €3.001 - 3.200
16. €3.201 - 3.400
17. €3.401 - 3.600
18. €3.601 - 3.800

19. €3.801 - 4.000
20. More than €4,000
21. Don't know
22. Not specified

Occupational prestige

What was your last occupation? Please tell me the exact name of the profession or describe the nature of your work and professional position. (*Interviewer: Assign to Ö-ISCO 08 2-digit: list attached. If not assignable, take note.*)

Discrimination

Did you feel discriminated against in the following areas, i.e., treated less favorably for no objective reason?

Area	Yes	No	No answer
1) In your last job?	1	2	99
2) At the end of your last employment relationship?	1	2	99
3) When applying for new jobs?	1	2	99
4) During counseling at the AMS?	1	2	99

Stigma

Do the following statements apply to you very much, quite a bit, a little, or not at all?

Statement	Very much	Fairly	A little	Not at all
1) I find it difficult to maintain relationships with people who are employed.	1	2	3	4
2) I believe that most people are more prejudiced against the unemployed than they openly say.	1	2	3	4
3) I feel personally affected by prejudice against the unemployed.	1	2	3	4
4) In certain situations I try to hide the fact that I am unemployed.	1	2	3	4
5) I am ashamed of being unemployed.	1	2	3	4

Gender

Finally, a few questions about yourself.

Your gender?

- Man 1
- Woman 2
- Diverse 3

Age

How old are you?

Migration background

- In which country were you born?
- In which country was your mother born?
- And your father?

	A)	B)	C)
Austria	1	1	1
Germany	2	2	2
Hungary/Czech Republic/Slovakia	3	3	3
Former Yugoslavia/Albania	4	4	4
Bulgaria/Romania	5	5	5
Other EU countries	6	6	6
Other Europe	7	7	7
Turkey	8	8	8
Arab region	9	9	9
Iran	10	10	10
Africa	11	11	11
China	12	12	12
Philippines	13	13	13
Other Asia	14	14	14
Other country	15	15	15
don't know/no answer	16	16	16