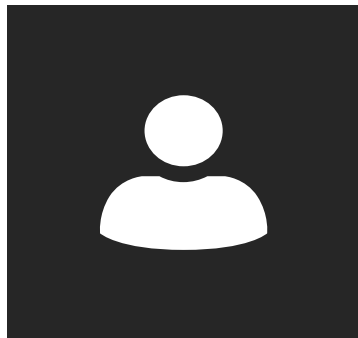


Labor Misvaluation and UBI as a Corrective Measure:

How the COVID-19 Pandemic exposed inequities in compensation for essential vs non-essential workers



PRESENTER:
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BACKGROUND

During the COVID-19 pandemic, millions who worked on the front lines earned less than those working safely from home. In a free-market capitalist system where wages are driven by supply and demand rather than social value, this contradiction exposed a deep failure in how labor is recognized and rewarded. As economic instability, automation, and inequality intensify, addressing this misvaluation isn't just fair—it's essential for long-term prosperity.

METHODS

- 1. Public opinion data from Twitter on mentions of and attitude towards UBI pre- and post-COVID
- 2. Studies on the effects of direct cash transfers in the US and Canada as a response to COVID

RESULTS

- Mentions of UBI surged in tweets during the first 6 months of the pandemic
- Cash transfers boosted consumer spending and mental health, while providing financial security, with recipients overwhelmingly supporting an extension of the programs

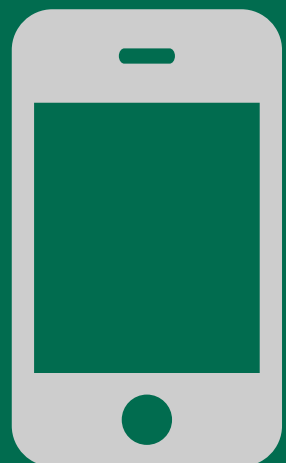


Why did 57% of essential frontline workers earn less than \$20/hour during the pandemic?

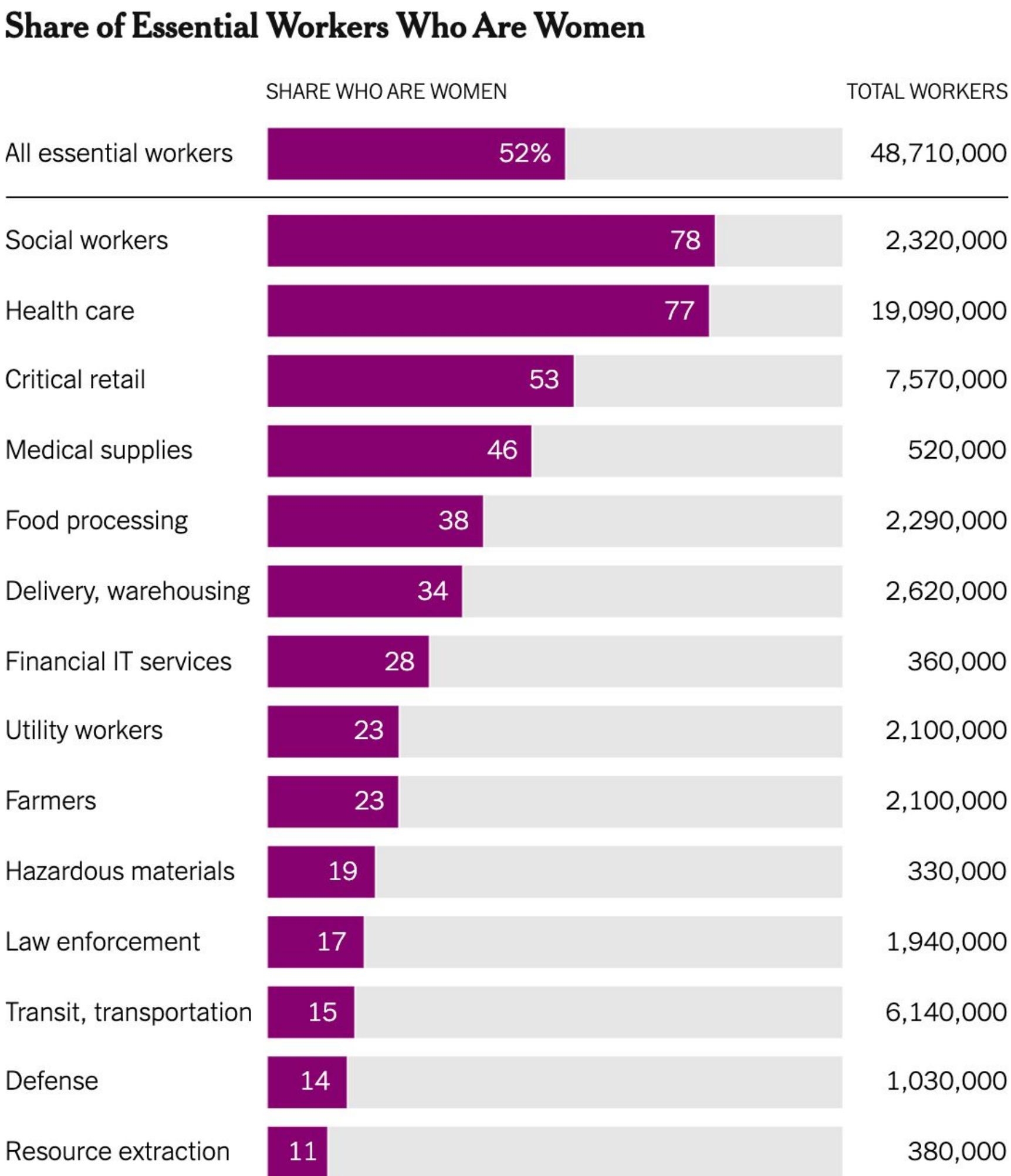


via *The Spectator*

Universal Basic Income (UBI) = regular, unconditional cash payment to all citizens



Scan the code to check out the full paper

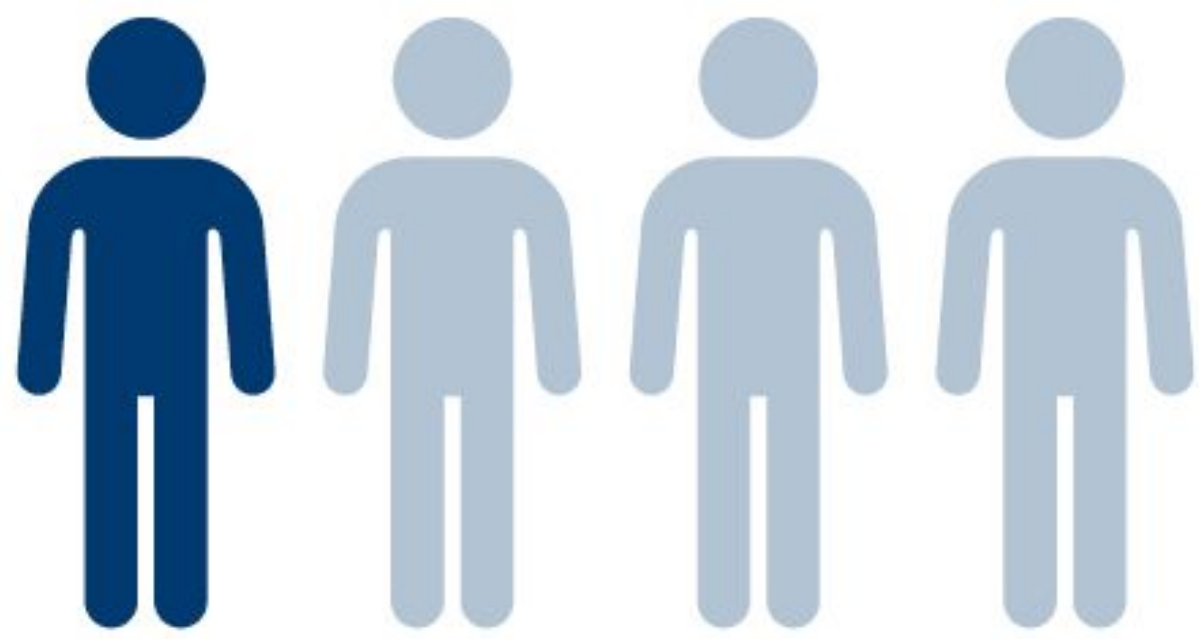


Source: American Community Survey microdata, 2014-18; ipums.org By The New York Times

UNPAID LABOR

- Much of care work worldwide is completely uncompensated, despite its enormous social value
- Women and people of color comprise a disproportionate percentage of undercompensated essential workers
- The UN estimates that unpaid care work would be worth nearly 9% of global GDP if monetized
- UBI could serve as a structural correction, recognizing unpaid care and social work, and providing a much-needed buffer against income volatility and instability
- UBI also leads recipients to pursue more creative and charitable endeavors, fostering collective well-being

1 IN 4 ESSENTIAL WORKERS (25%) DIAGNOSED WITH MENTAL HEALTH DISORDER SINCE START OF PANDEMIC



KEY SOURCES

Evelyn Forget, David Graeber, Jane Collins, Daniel Nettle, Audrey Kearney