Migration & the Transnationalization of Social Protection

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Defining social protection

Silo-ization of research on immigrant social protection research

| SP needs as trigger/consequence of migration | Access to formal SP | Care chains & transnational families | Diaspora policies |

Social protection regimes (Holzman/Avato)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>REGIME I</th>
<th>REGIME II</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Access to social security benefits + bilateral agreements</td>
<td>Access to social security benefits in the absence of bilateral agreements</td>
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<tr>
<th>REGIME III</th>
<th>REGIME IV</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No access to portable social security but some limited rights to health</td>
<td>Undoc. Migrants &amp; doc. Migrants on the informal labour market</td>
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Limits of existing research

- What role for sending societies besides social security agreements?
- Which immigrants are best protected to deal with social risks?
- How do formal and informal social protection interact?

Transnational Social Protection (TSP) as an emerging concept

- Tentative definition of TSP:
  Migrants’ cross-border strategies to cope with social risks in areas such as health, long-term care, pensions or unemployment, that combine entitlements to host and home state-based public welfare policies and market, family- and community-based practice

- Peggy Levitt: Resource environment
- Thomas Faist et al.: emergence of new inequalities at the transnational level

Bridging the gap between welfare studies and migration studies’ understandings of immigrant social protection

Step 1:
Building 2 indexes on “Social Protection from above” in 40 countries
Early findings (1): nationality still matters
EU social security coordination, pushes EU MS to opt for residence-based social protection policies

• Denmark and the mobility premium for EU citizens
But national advantages do remain
• Hungary & family benefit

Early findings (2): policy ≠ access
• Non-take up is a well documented phenomenon yet
• “Generous” Social protection legislation for immigrants may also be counterbalanced by migration policies
• Growing interconnections between welfare and migration policies
• Belgium use of welfare as migration control

Early findings (3): State apparatus
• Important variations in the state infrastructure that allow nationals to exercise their “social citizenship” outside of the territory

• Examples:
  • Italy and its patronati
  • UK and the digitalization of welfare
  • Latvia and the “one-stop-shop” approach

Step 2:
Qualitatively assess Transnational Social Protection Strategies through case-studies
Pilot Case study: Congolese diaspora involvement in host and home countries’ health policies

Hypothesis

THE PARTICULAR POSITION OF IMMIGRANTS IN DESTINATION & HOME COUNTRY SOCIAL PROTECTION SYSTEMS SHAPES

• the way they organize family access to SP across borders
• the recourse to formal and informal strategies

Solidarco: A Transnational Community-based Health Insurance

What is Solidarco?

• Bottom-up initiative of the Congolese diaspora in Belgium
• Partnership with a Belgian Mutual Insurance Society
• Financial support of Belgian authorities (co-development)
• Migrants pay a 30EUR monthly premium to cover up to 7 relatives in Kinshasa
• 172 customers = coverage for 1204 relatives
• Kinshasa office organizes access to care and provides support to beneficiaries
Strengths & weaknesses

+ Experience of Belgian health actors
+ Reduces financial uncertainty for immigrants
+ Facilitates access to care for (some) relatives

- Fragile Socio-economic status of DRC migrants
- Relevance of postcolonial context neglected
- Trust & family obligations
- Competition with local initiatives

“I fear that the diaspora is trying to maintain control (...) over their families with [Solidarco]. They should instead encourage them to join the local community-based health insurance.”

Congolese Civil Servant, Kinshasa