Social inequalities and support between generations

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Turbulent times

- Ageing, crises, rising inequalities
- Pressure
  - Pensions, support
- Potentials
  - Healthy life years
  - More shared time between generations (?)
- Middle (sandwich) generation has an important function within families
  - Support to parents
  - Support to children
- Links between solidarity and inequality?

EU27 1990

EU27 2050

Eurostat
Intergenerational support

- Transfers are common within families
  - Financial and practical support to adult children
  - Grandchild care
  - Hands-on help and care to older parents
- Most support between parents and (adult) children

- Support motives
  - „Altruism“
  - Joy of giving
  - Reciprocity
  - Love and concern

- Family as safety net in times of need
Influencing factors

Social inequality and deprivation might change exactly that!

- Personal level
  - Increased needs
  - Reduced opportunities

- Context level
  - Increased family support due to more dependence
  - Reduced family support due to lower overall resources and lower social cohesion
Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe (SHARE)
- Wave 5, respondents 50+
  - Transfers between three generations
  - Social and material deprivation (household level)

116 regions from 14 countries
- Sweden, Denmark, Netherlands, Belgium, France, Luxembourg, Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Spain, Italy, Estonia, Czech Republic, Slovenia
- Regional context: Income inequality (Gini)
Transfers

Source: SHARE Wave 5; n=6,659
Social deprivation

- Less than one room per person in HH
- Poor reading or writing skills
- Poor computer skills or never used a computer
- Not feeling part of the local area
- Vandalism in the local area
- Local area not clean
- No helpful people in local area
- Difficult access to bank
- Difficult access to grocery shop
- Difficult access to pharmacy
- Waiting too long to see a doctor
- Not attending any course in the past 12 months
- Not taking part in any organisation in the past 12 months
- People cannot be trusted
- Feeling left out of things
Material deprivation

- Was there a time in the past 12 months when you needed to see a doctor but could not because of cost?
- [You] do not eat meat, fish or chicken / fruits or vegetables more often [than three times per week] because: you cannot afford to eat it more often
- Can your household afford to regularly buy necessary groceries and household supplies/ to go for a week long holiday away from home at least once a year/ to pay an unexpected expense without borrowing any money?
- In the last twelve months, to help you keep your living costs down, have you...
  - continued wearing clothing /shoes /not replaced glasses that was worn out because you could not afford replacement?
  - put up with feeling cold to save heating costs?
  - postponed visits to the dentist?
Descriptive analysis

- No deprivation 50%
- Material deprivation (2+) 21%
- Social deprivation (2+) 12%
- Material and social deprivation 16%
Deprivation and transfers

Source: SHARE Wave 5; n=6,659
Binary multilevel logit models: transfers

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>To child</th>
<th>From child</th>
<th>From parent</th>
<th>To parent</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Respondent households</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Deprived (log(n items))</td>
<td>-0.33**</td>
<td>0.26**</td>
<td>-0.03</td>
<td>-0.17**</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Regions</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Inequality (Gini)</td>
<td>-0.07**</td>
<td>-0.12**</td>
<td>-0.10**</td>
<td>-0.06**</td>
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</tbody>
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Source: SHARE Wave 5, n=6,659 respondents, 116 regions; * p < .10. * p < .05. ** p < .01.

Controlling for household composition, education, income, age, family composition, child and parent characteristics: gender, contact, distance, health, employment as well as regional GDP
Deprived respondents
give transfers to children and older parents less likely (opportunities)
but receive help from their children more likely (needs)
Intergenerational support in all directions is less likely in regions having more inequality
Changed solidarity patterns between generations with more inequality

Social inequality problematic for families
Micro level
Parents lose their “normal” role as providers and need help from their offspring
Macro level
Families are more vulnerable in regions with more inequality

Summary: solidarity changed
How can we get a little closer to “mechanisms” and causalities here?
What is the additional role of contextual social inequality when controlling for individual deprivation and GDP?
Wilkinson & Pickett: The Spirit Level
- lower social cohesion – higher social stress?!
Information about non-resp. deprivation missing
- control for intergenerational social mobility (but we have no measures)

... further suggestions & comments – or questions?!

THANK YOU!