

Nyirenda et al. *Employment, government cash transfers and household living arrangements in old age: Implications for intergenerational support in rural South Africa*

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South Africa has a well-documented system of social assistance in the form of cash transfers to older people, persons with disabilities and children, initially designed to assist poor white people reaching retirement age without adequate pension provision but gradually extended to all non-white people by 1994 at the dawn of democratic governance. However, in many rural areas of South Africa, income from government cash transfers, particularly the older age grant, has become the mainstay of household well-being. Scholars have revealed that unemployed adults are less likely to set up their own household and more likely to live with an old-age grant recipient to benefit from the resources.

The objectives of this study are threefold:

1. To describe household living arrangements of older people aged 60+ in rural South Africa over the period 2005-2010;
2. To examine access to income (from government cash transfers or employment) by the older person and other household members over the same period; and
3. To postulate on the probable directional flow of support exchanges between younger and older people given income sources and living arrangements within the household.

Theoretical Debate or Historical Context: The paper begins with a section on theoretical considerations. The intergenerational solidarity model, assumes that the transfer of care and support between younger and older generations is governed by family bonds, which encompasses emotional connectedness, geographical proximity, shared norms, values and expectations. According to the political-economy perspective, intergenerational support is highly dependent on the economic and political constraints imposed on the individual. The paper combined the two models taking into account individual's characteristics.

Data and Methods: The study used data from the longitudinal Africa Centre Health and Demographic Surveillance System located in uMkhanyakude district in northern KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. Analysis focused on data collected from 2005 to 2010. Persons aged 60 years or older were defined as older people, while adults are those aged 18-59 years, and children those aged less than 18 years. This definition is consistent with the South African laws that considered work by children under 18 which as exploitative and sets eligibility for old-age pension grants at 60 years old. However, this classification raise question about people aged 18 or below living in marital union and/or have children.

Measurement of the outcome variable and other variables is well described in the paper. Statistical techniques encompass chi-square, t-tests and log-rank tests and multinomial logistic regression. The last method was run for assessing change between t_0 and t_1 into peer, downward, upward and reciprocal support using no

change in intergenerational transfer flows as the base outcome, given changes in living arrangements. Authors may provide more details on how multinomial logistic regression can be used to describe or monitor changes over time.

The study also described clearly the concept of the government cash transfer in South Africa, especially in the rural context.

Results: Though the proportion of households with at least one person accessing a government grant has steadily increased in both households with older men and with older women, the proportion of households where the older person is the only grant recipient in the household has fallen over time. Likewise, the proportion of older persons who were the sole income earners in their household declined over time. Findings from this study support the intergenerational solidarity model and the economic approach. Whatever income is earned (from employment or grants) by household members will somewhat be shared. The reciprocal pattern is the most dominant model of exchanges. However, older people living with adult offspring were more likely to support their children or other adults (downward support) or involved in a mutual support.

Conclusion and way forward: This paper showed mutual (intergenerational) support among household's members regarding of their age (reciprocity-downward-upward support). Individual share their resources with other household's members (parents, children or other relatives). The paper is very long; authors can combine the sections on sources of income and income pooling as well as summarize that new section. The introduction is very short and reads like an abstract. It does not show the rationale of the study.