Motivation to Provide Help to Older Parents: Between & Within Countries

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Motivation to Provide Help to Older Parents

- The goal: to present and discuss empirical findings from 1. a cross-national study* – (focusing on Israel, Norway and Spain) and 2. a cross-cultural study – within Israel** (focusing on Jews and Arabs)

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Goals of the Studies

- How parents affect amount of support they will be receiving from their children?
  - Distinguish pathways by which parents influence their children to provide support to them.
  - Impact of parents’ needs on support provision
  - Examine whether these paths are different for various dimensions of intergenerational solidarity
Studies’ Rationale

- Prolonged periods of family elder care
- Parental support a normative part of life course
- Complex relationship between motivations for and commitment to parental support and actual supportive behavior
How is Culture of Care Reproduced: Intergenerational Mechanisms

1. **Socialization**: Parents socialize children to caring by transmitting core values of commitment to parental care

2. **Social learning**: parents instill in children such values by **modeling** or **demonstrating** the desired behavior
Intergenerational Mechanisms of Parental Influence

3. **Affectual Ties (Solidarity):** Emotional bonding with parents strengthens commitment of adult children to provide support

4. **Life Course Reciprocity and Exchange:**
   
   (a) Elder care as a *repayment* for past in-vivo transfers
   
   (b) Elder care as *prepayment* for a bequest anticipated
Filial Norms and Family Support

- In almost all societies older adults expect to rely on adult children as critical sources of support and care, should they become frail.

- Evidence, however, on the relationship between normative expectations by older people and actual support they receive appears to be equivocal.
Motivation and Family Support

Hypotheses:

- (1) Emotional bonds, filial norms, and geographic proximity impact amount of help adult children provide to older parents
- (2) Parental needs of care will affect amount of help adult children provide
- (3) These effects will be more pronounced in countries where familistic tradition is strong (Israel & Spain) compared with a more individualistic country (Norway)
- (4) These effects will be stronger within the Arab community
Rationale for Countries Selection

- The **three countries** cover a diverse range of welfare regimes (conservative, social democratic) and familial cultures (family-oriented and individualistic).

- Israel presents particular challenges having diverse family cultures and a wide range of elders’ social services. These are differentially expressed within the Jewish and Arab groups.
## Characteristics of the countries as welfare state regimes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Norway</th>
<th>Spain</th>
<th>Israel</th>
<th>Arabs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Welfare state Regime</td>
<td>Social-democratic</td>
<td>Conservative/southern</td>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Legal family obligation?</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social care service level</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fertility</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Welfare state regime (Esping-Andersen 1990, 1999), legal obligations (Millar & Warman 1996), social care levels (various sources), fertility (UN 2002).
The Sample – EU and BSF

EU

- **Size**: About 1200 persons in each country, oversampling the 75+ - about 1/3
- **Research population**: Inhabitants of ‘urban areas’
- **Sampling method**: Random

BSF

- **Size**: Close to 200 Arab elders and 200 Jewish elders
- **Research population**: Inhabitants of urban and rural areas
- **Sampling method**: Random
Measures

- **Intergenerational Solidarity** – Items for the solidarity dimensions were selected by Bengtson & Silverstein from their Longitudinal Study of Generations (LSOG)
- **Structural solidarity**: geographic proximity
- **Affectual solidarity**: emotional bonds
- **Functional solidarity**: bi-directional exchange of assistance provided by parents to children and received
- **Normative solidarity** or filial norms, agreements to 4 statements familism scale, based on Lee, Peek and Coward (1998)
- **Parental needs for care**: ADL functioning and asking whether the elder needed care on a regular basis
Motivation - Findings

Intergenerational Solidarity

- Inter-correlations between the various dimensions revealed low correlations (.26 to .34) which points to the model's multidimensionality

- To facilitate a clear comparison between the 3 countries and within Israel, dimensions were transformed into dichotomous indicators, as used by Silverstein & Bengtson (1994)

- Differences on all dimensions between all samples, by chi-square tests, were significant at .001.
Motivation - Findings

- A high percentage in all countries reported high levels of affection - the highest in Israel (on a scale from 1-5 ($M = 4.7$)); relatively low in Norway ($M = 4.3$); living quite close to their children (again, low in Norway).
- Both older Jews and Arabs were high on affection.
- Normative solidarity was the highest in Spain, then Israel and the lowest in Norway. Within Israel Arabs were significantly higher.
- Functional assistance received by parents from children was higher than provided.
Motivation - Findings

- Largest amount of support provided was emotional, then financial assistance and child care. Instrumental support was relatively low.

- Adult children are the net providers in the relationship; giving more than receiving. This is strengthened by parents’ view, who receive more than they give.
Motivation - Findings

- Older parents are, however, not only in the receiving end. Their support is mainly emotional support, and in some countries (Norway, Israel) also money

- Instrumental help is flowing upwards, financial support downwards, when pension levels and living conditions allow it
Motivation Findings – Israeli Society

- Data indicate similarities and differences in support received by the two groups. Older Arabs and Jews received similar support in house repair, personal care and emotional

- In two areas significant differences were found: the Arab population received more help with household chores and more financial assistance. Jewish elders, however, received more assistance with transportation
Motivation - Findings

- Data also indicate that parental needs, like declining health and physical functioning, attract help in all countries, and parents’ age (older) and gender (women) enhances this
Conclusions

- Solidarity was strong for the majority in all three countries

- Respondents acknowledge some degree of filial obligations, but more so in Spain and Israel than in Norway
Affinity for Parent (Solidarity)

- Strong affectual ties predicted:
  - Higher levels of both instrumental and emotional support
  - Higher rates of co-residence were leading to increased social support
Conclusions

- **Country context** shapes motivation: emotional solidarity predicts help in the more familistic countries (Israel and Spain)

- Parental needs for care predict help in countries with a high service level for elders (Norway and Israel)

- **Cultural context** shapes motivation: filial norms predict help in the Arab society more than for the Jewish population
Conclusions

- Caregiving runs in families
  - Parents can teach their children to provide care by modeling the desired behavior to them.
  - Socialization of norms does not guarantee support: Do as I do not as I say.

- Interpersonal relationships matter

- The principle of reciprocity operates in families over time
Thanks for your attention