Project “Social cash transfers. The global construction and diffusion of the right to a monetary minimum” (FLOOR-B)

www.floorcash.org

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Duration: 2010-2017


Project Summary:

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) proclaimed the equality of all human beings in dignity and rights. The right to social security, however, has been taken more seriously only since the 2000s, through calls for ‘Social Security for All’ and ‘Leaving no-one behind’. The project investigates a major response, social cash transfers to the poor. The idea of simply giving money to the poor had been rejected by all major development organizations, but since the early 2000s, social cash transfers have mushroomed in the global South and on agendas of international organizations. How come? What programmes have emerged in which countries? How inclusive are the programmes? What models have international organizations devised? Based on unique quantitative and qualitative data and on newly created concepts and indicators, the project takes stock of all identifiable cash transfers in all Southern countries and of the views of all major international organizations.

The project found that cash transfers reflect broader changes: new understandings of development, of human rights, of global risks, of the social responsibility of governments, and of universalism. The summary book of the project (Leisering 2019) also contributes to a general theory of social policy in development contexts, through a constructivist sociological approach that complements the dominant approaches from welfare economics and political economy and includes a theory of social assistance.

In short, the project …

• provides a unique database, covering all countries in the global South, with in-depth variables

• combines quantitative and qualitative methods

• develops a sociological theory of social policy in developing contexts

• develops concepts and indicators of social assistance and social cash transfers

Outcomes of the project (publications, data base)

The book seeks to advance research on social cash transfers:

- by going beyond case studies of flagship programmes to mapping all programmes in all countries of the South, based on a unique self-constructed data base and on new indicators
- by going from describing to theorizing and explaining cash transfers
- by going from administrative issues of finance, implementation, and effects to normative foundations
- by going from single cash transfer programmes to national cash transfer regimes (systemic approach)
- by complementing studies of domestic programmes by an analysis of concepts of international organizations since the 1990s
- by using both quantitative and qualitative methods
- by embedding social cash transfers in a general theory of social assistance and basic security in North and South
- by developing an institutionalist sociological theory of social policy that covers both the global North and South and focuses on processes of recognition, complementing approaches from political economy and development economics.

**Data base** and background information: [www.floorcash.org](http://www.floorcash.org)

A unique set of data bases, with data on all identifiable cash transfer programmes in all countries of the global South, and on the cash transfer concepts of all major international organizations since the 1990s. The data bases have in-depth variables on entitlements that allow to construct refined indicators of the inclusiveness/exclusiveness of cash transfer programmes, as done in the FLOOR-B project.

**Further publications:**

a) Book


Even if the title does not say so: this is the only in-depth analysis of how international organizations conceive of social cash transfers, why they switched from rejection to acceptance since the 1990s, what broader changes in global discourses framed this change, what models of transfers international organizations proposed, and how they eventually reached a global consensus. The book applies a multi-level approach to ideational analysis, based on the Sociology of Knowledge Approach to Discourse Analysis (SKAD).
b) Articles


c) Forthcoming articles


Lutz Leisering (2020) The quest for universalism in global social security – concepts, predicaments, strategies (forthcoming in a special issue on universalism)
d) Unpublished PhD theses
