

T16P02 / Expanding Social Protection Coverage to Informal Workers: Building a Global Evidence base on Policy Design and Implementation

Topic : T16 / GLOBAL POLICY

Chair : Willetta Waisath (WORLD Policy Analysis Center, UCLA Fielding School of Public Health)

Second Chair : Gonzalo Moreno (WORLD Policy Analysis Center, University of California Los Angeles)

GENERAL OBJECTIVES, RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND SCIENTIFIC RELEVANCE

Despite 20th century predictions to the contrary, the prevalence of informal work has not diminished over time and in fact remains a critical issue in the 21st century. Today, work in the informal economy comprises over 60% of the global workforce, and is characterized by serious decent work deficits and low resilience to economic crises. Social security is a longstanding human right, and in recent years, the global community has acknowledged the need to design and implement social protection systems that meet the persistent reality of a large population of working poor people engaged in the informal economy. Yet, as of 2020, only 47% per cent of the global population were effectively covered by at least one social protection benefit.

This proposed panel seeks to explore and highlight emerging and evidence-based approaches to dismantling persistent barriers to effective social protection of informal workers, including but not limited to: policy design, low levels of awareness and trust, administrative hurdles, and lack of worker representation and organization.

The informal economy is broad and diverse – it includes dependent waged employment and own account work, rural and urban work, and employment across economic sectors in diverse contexts around the world. To formalize all workers' right to social protection, it's critical that researchers and policymakers identify specific obstacles that different types of informal workers face, hypothesize and test measures that can overcome these obstacles, and ultimately develop a set of evidence-based practices for policy design and implementation to share with policymakers and practitioners around the globe.

This panel will be chaired by researchers from the WORLD Policy Analysis Center (WORLD) at the University of California, Los Angeles. WORLD works to strengthen equal rights and opportunities by (1) identifying effective policy approaches, (2) improving the quantity and quality of global comparative policy indicators available to policymakers, citizens, civil society, and researchers, and (3) working in partnership to support positive, evidence-based change in communities and countries worldwide. This panel will focus on empirical approaches to better understanding and identifying barriers to social protection coverage of informal workers, and which approaches—national or otherwise—are successfully being designed and implemented to advance access to decent work and social protection.

CALL FOR PAPERS

Informal work comprises over 60% of the global workforce, and is characterized by a lack of labor rights and social protections. Social security is a longstanding human right, and in recent years, the global community has acknowledged the need to design and implement social protection systems that meet the persistent reality that a large population of working poor people are engaged in the informal economy. At the same time, the informal economy is broad and diverse – it includes dependent waged employment and own account work, rural and urban work, and employment across economic sectors in varied contexts around the world.

This panel invites submissions designed to better understand, identify, and overcome barriers to effective social protection coverage of informal workers working in diverse contexts around the world. It specifically welcomes empirical examinations of approaches, national or otherwise, which are successfully being designed and implemented to advance access to decent work and social protection for informal workers in low- and middle-income countries. Submitted papers can address any of the wide range of barriers to effective social protection of informal workers broadly and in specific sectors, including but not limited to: policy design, low levels of awareness and trust, administrative hurdles, and lack of worker representation and organization.

This panel aims to include submissions from a wide range of disciplines and policy domains, and encourages empirical research on policy and intervention measures in diverse economic contexts worldwide.

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Session 1

Thursday, June 29th 08:00 to 10:00 (KHE323)

“The diffusion of global public policies and the adoption of national public policies related to social protection coverage in Mexico: a comparative case study of two international conventions”

Benjamin Madrigal Cruz (Universidad Iberoamericana)

This paper is aimed at finding out which factors influence the adoption of global public policy related to social protection coverage derived from the ratification of international conventions by Mexico, at the beginning of the 21st century. This analysis is done through the comparative study of two representative cases:

(i) social protection coverage to domestic workers based on International Labor Organization's (ILO) Convention no. 189, and,

(ii) social protection coverage to migrant workers based on International Labor Organization's (ILO) Convention no. 97.

In both cases, the evidence of the four most accepted types of diffusion mechanisms that allow global public policies to permeate locally, (i.e. Learning, Emulation, Coercion, and Competition), through the ratification of those two international conventions, is analyzed for both study cases.

Currently, only ILO's Convention no. 189 has been ratified by Mexico and has begun to generate the first level of local public social protection coverage policies for domestic workers.

On the other hand, the other ILO's Convention, i.e. No. 97, has not been yet ratified by Mexico, despite the urgent need of proper public social protection coverage policies for migrant workers, that can also address the current under-recognized migratory crisis in the country.

At the same time, for both cases, a qualitative approach methodology is proposed with an empirical-comparative research design, based on the perspective of the historical institutionalism.

And last but not least, the paper seeks to identify recommendations for national public policies on social protection coverage in Mexico, in order to achieve better consistency and compliance with the corresponding global public policies derived from both ILO's international conventions.

Effects of Unconditional Cash Transfers on Wellbeing and Demand for Government Services: Evidence from an Experiment in Urban India

Tanushree Bhan (World Bank)

Over the past two decades, growing informalization of poverty has generated a reckoning towards adoption of cash transfers as a social protection policy tool in several developing countries. Whilst policy-influencers and policymakers have shown greater proclivity for behavior change-oriented Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) programs, there is emerging scholarly evidence which shows that Unconditional Cash Transfer (UCT) programs can produce similar gains in development outcomes like education, nutrition, savings, and investments. For a developing country like India, with close to 90 percent of its workforce engaged in the informal economy, UCTs can be effective in overcoming barriers in existing social policy design related to targeting, enrolment complexities, and administrative burdens in welfare provision. However, scholars have

also argued that the administrative simplicity of a UCT-based welfare policy can perversely incentivize policymakers to under-invest in critical, and often complex social programs such as public education, health, and food provisions.

The foregoing discussion sets the context for this paper that draws from an ongoing pilot study on a UCT experiment across 4 urban slum communities of mostly waste-pickers in Hyderabad, India. The discussion and analyses in the paper is based on examining the following two primary research questions: (i) What is the impact of UCTs on a range of individual and household-level outcomes such as the nature and duration of laborforce participation, allocation of women's time-use between paid and unpaid activities, type of school enrolment and attendance among children, access and type of healthcare for ailing members, and household consumption, savings and investment patterns; and (ii) What is the impact of UCTs on households' perceived need for public services like water supply and trash collection, and welfare programs like senior pensions, subsidized health insurance, and food supply via public provisions stores. The initial answers to these questions will be based on two rounds of survey of 310 households at baseline (April-May, 2022) and midline (March-April, 2023). The methodological innovation in this study is that the survey questionnaire includes two experimental modules: (a) a conjoint experiment to track labor preferences for job-type (daily wage v. contractual v. salaried; job-related benefits like overtime pay, health insurance v. no benefits; time-taken to work destination) over 3 survey rounds; and (b) a budget game played over 3 survey rounds to track preferred expenditure patterns of households across food, asset accumulation, debt repayment, healthcare, education, savings, and investment in 3 hypothetical scenarios of normalcy, distress, and surplus. Findings from this study will advance the empirical literature on the impact of UCTs on a wide range of development outcomes disaggregated by gender, class, and ethno-religiosity, and contribute to scholarly and policy debates on UCTs as a *part* of the overarching architecture of social protection policy.

The objective and motivation for this paper is aligned with the theme of the panel on Social Protection coverage to Informal Workers (T16P02) because it seeks to identify and understand the vulnerabilities of informal work, and aims to offer an actionable policy approach to promote social justice and human development.

(Virtual) Maternity protection for informal sector workers in Sub-Saharan Africa: Insights from Mozambique, Tanzania, and Togo

Zitha Mokomane (University of Pretoria)

Despite the widely established importance of maternity protection for poverty reduction; improved health and nutrition for young children and their mothers; gender equality; and the advancement of decent work, much of the extant research, literature, and programs on the subject focuses on its benefits for women working in the formal sector. This is an important research and policy gap given that globally, about 740 million women are working in the informal sector with the proportion being relatively higher in developing regions such as sub-Saharan Africa (92%). Using case studies from three countries in this region (Mozambique, Tanzania, and Togo), this paper will demonstrate the different legislative and policy approaches taken by different countries to expand social protection through maternity protection for parents working in the informal sector. The paper focuses on the successes, challenges, and costs of reaching women working in the informal sector, with the goal of shedding light on past achievements and remaining gaps. The results will be relevant and of interest to policymakers, civil society advocates, and other stakeholders from similar or comparable countries.

Social Protection barriers in Uganda: Perspectives of recipients from Kampala and Alebtong districts

Stellah Lubinga (University of Pretoria)

Tyanai Masiya (University of Pretoria)

Although the potential importance of social protection and implementation has been appreciated in Uganda since 1985, whereby the government has diligently committed to various social protection interventions and the rights to social protection are also set out in the country's Constitution. In particular, the Constitution instructs the State to take affirmative action in favour of marginalised groups, protect the unique and natural maternal function of women, the rights of children, persons with disabilities, ethnic minorities and the economic rights of every Ugandan. In reality, only 11% of the population is covered by at least one social protection scheme in Uganda, whilst only 1.2% of the budget is spent on public social protection expenditure by GDP. This beseeching the question of what are the persistent barriers to adequate social protection in Uganda witnessed by the recipients. Using a quantitative approach, data were collected using a survey

questionnaire to augment findings from previous qualitative studies. This research finds that the following interrelated factors were responsible for the persistent barriers to adequate social protection in Uganda: the lack of awareness of the social protection interventions that recipients may qualify for in their jurisdiction, the focus is more on the formal sector as opposed to the informal sector, flawed recipient lists due to the lack of the national vulnerability list, irregular disbursement of funds, and the lack of government commitment. To remedy these challenges, the paper proposes that government strengthens social policy guideline implementation, create more awareness of social protection interventions amongst the recipients through sensitisation campaigns, develop an electronic vulnerability database across the country, encourage a culture of coproduction with a focus on greater recipient participation and lastly increase the budget amount allocated to social protection.