

Abstract

„Recht sozial. Disziplinenübergreifende Perspektiven auf soziale Sicherheit.“

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Social law on different levels - transnational, national, municipal and local welfare regulations and provisions in Serbia/Southeastern Europe. The case of Marija. and her daughter Vesna¹

In the paper I will present material from an ongoing research project on ‘Local State and Social Security in Rural Hungary, Romania and Serbia’ funded by the Volkswagen-Foundation and carried out at the Max-Planck-Institute for Social Anthropology in Halle. The focus of the talk shall fit into several main issues of the conference focus theme “Social security”:

- Understanding legal regimes, ideologies and practices of social security in non-German countries and societies. (Welches Verständnis und welche Praxen sozialer Sicherheit existieren in unterschiedlichen gesellschaftlichen Milieus und Ländern?)
- How do procedural realities affect the chances of realizing claims and entitlements for different groups and individuals? (Wie wirkt sich die Realität von Verfahren auf die Mobilisierung von Recht und die Durchsetzung von Ansprüchen aus?)
- In how far can the state be seen as the guarantor of social security, what role do the ‚private‘ sphere or transnational structures play? (Inwieweit ist der Staat Garant sozialer Sicherheit, inwieweit ist diese eher in der ‚privaten‘ Sphäre zu verorten und inwieweit wirken hierbei transnationale Einflüsse?)

Taking an anthropological approach and drawing on my fieldwork in Serbia, I present an ethnographic case study of 63-year old Vesna and her 85-year old mother Marija. Vesna came to Serbia as a Serbian refugee from Croatia during the Yugoslav wars of the 1990ies but has reclaimed her Croatian citizenship. She had been born and raised though in Serbia, her mother always lived in village communities in that former Yugoslav republic. I trace the daughter’s efforts to ensure old-age care for her mother as well as medical treatment for herself and analyze how different levels and regimes of social security legislation/provision as well as their actual implementation play out in multiple arenas and affect both women’s chances for social security. I distinguish between a transnational, a bilateral Croatian-Serbian, a national and a local-municipal legal/normative context in order to demonstrate how individuals engage with such

¹ The names of persons have been anonymized in order to protect their right to privacy.

situations of plural legal orders but also to point to the tensions such plural and sometimes conflicting norms and legal prescriptions evoke in local social relations.