

CALL FOR CHAPTER PROPOSALS

Working Title of the Book: **Poverty in Later Life: Life Course and Everyday Life Perspectives**

Editors:

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We are pleased to invite contributions for a forthcoming edited volume exploring poverty in later life (approximately age 65 and above). We seek research-based chapters grounded in the conceptual frameworks of the life course and everyday life, with a focus on the interplay between individual experiences of poverty and the welfare state, either in the post–World War II period or in contemporary times.

Conceptual Framework

Poverty continues to be a central concern in the social sciences, as it shapes and is shaped by individual, community, societal, and global dynamics. Most existing poverty research focuses on its incidence and scope — employing statistical measures, international comparisons, and analyses of income distribution and inequality (e.g., Milanović, 2016; Gaisbauer et al., 2020; Stiglitz, 2013; Longford, 2015, Nolan & Whelan, 2012, etc.). These studies have significantly advanced our understanding of structural mechanisms that sustain poverty and social inequality by providing valuable insights into the magnitude of the phenomenon, poverty trends, groups of people affected, calculations of poverty thresholds and inequalities in income and wealth distribution. However, quantitative data alone offer a limited perspective on how poverty is reproduced across generations, how it is experienced by individuals, which strategies they adopt to cope with it, and how it intersects with other domains such as education, culture, healthcare, labour markets, and social relationships.

This volume aims to complement and deepen the existing body of knowledge by emphasizing qualitative research approaches that examine the everyday lives and life worlds of people living in poverty in old age. Drawing on the life course perspective allows for an exploration of how poverty is shaped by and interacts with broader historical, political, and institutional contexts across an individual's lifespan (Nico & Polloc, 2022; Gilleard & Higgs, 2020; Rank & Hirschl, 2015; Katz et al., 2011; Schaffner-Goldberg, 2010, etc.).

The concept of *everyday life* highlights an individual's agency, and discursive and /or cognitive practices, while the idea of the *lifeworld* encompasses the domains in which these actions and practices take place. The *life course* approach makes it possible to investigate how social structures, cultural norms, and institutional arrangements interact with personal experiences over time (Elder & Giele, 2009). It also allows for the analysis of trajectories, transitions, and turning points within biographies, revealing how structural inequalities accumulate or evolve throughout life. Such an approach is particularly relevant for social policy research. It allows us to critically examine how policies designed to reduce poverty intersect with lived experiences and thereby help to uncover the mechanisms that may hinder their effectiveness.

Poverty studies based on a life course perspective take later life as their starting point because it permits an in-depth understanding of the intertwining of personal histories with cultural patterns, structural conditions, and social policies over the long durée. The life course is not only about the life cycles common to all individuals but also about the unique events, transitions, and roles that distinguish individual life paths. These are embedded in broader normative, structural, and cultural contexts that frame discourses on poverty and shape public policy responses. Individuals are deeply embedded in and dependent on systemic conditions and institutional frameworks. Their lives are influenced by prevailing social norms, as well as by public attitudes toward inequality, diversity, and marginalization. These factors shape their social status, livelihoods, self-understanding, and capacity for action — or, in Sen's (2002) terms, their capabilities. Understanding the complex interplay among these factors is crucial for developing effective and context-sensitive (e.g., types of welfare state and social policies) forms of support (Øyen, 1996; Daly, 2000).

Lister (2004) argues that the concept of poverty is both culturally and historically situated, with significant implications for how it is understood, measured, and addressed. Definitions, implicit assumptions, and measurement tools all shape the policies aimed at addressing it. This observation serves as a central point of departure for our edited volume.

Given our aim to include contributions from a wide range of countries, we deliberately avoid defining poverty exclusively in relative terms, such as the European Union's threshold of 60% of median household income. Instead, we encourage authors to conceptualise and define poverty in later life in ways that are grounded in their specific structural, cultural, and national contexts. We are not looking for chapters focused solely on specific forms of poverty (e.g., fuel, energy, or food poverty). Rather, we welcome contributions that explore how poverty in later life is shaped across the life course. We are particularly interested in analyses of the key drivers and causes of poverty in later life and how individual lives intersect with broader social, political, and economic structures.

Suggested Chapter Themes

We welcome proposals that align with the conceptual framing above and may address (but are not limited to) the following themes:

- **Life course trajectories:** childhood and youth, education, labour market participation, family and caregiving responsibilities, reproductive work, retirement, and other relevant
- **Everyday life in poverty:** survival strategies, the role of the welfare state, intertwining lives and structures, etc.
- **Linked lives, transitions and intergenerational relations**
- **Different dimensions (intersectional perspectives):** gender, migration, class, disability, sexual orientation, rural/urban divides, violence and other relevant dimensions

Tentative Timeline

- Abstract Review and Notification: July 30th, 2025
- Full Chapter Submission Deadline: December 15th, 2025
- Peer Review: March 30th, 2026
- Final Manuscript Submission: May 30th, 2026
- Expected Publication Date: Late 2026

Submission Guidelines: Please submit an abstract of up to 300 words, along with a short biographical note (max. 150 words) for each author, by June 20th, 2025. The abstract should clearly outline the chapter's focus, its theoretical or empirical basis, and its contribution to the volume's overall themes.

The book proposal will be submitted to **Policy Press**.

Submission and Contact

Please send abstracts and any questions to vesna.leskosek@fsd.uni-lj.si or ana.kralj@fsd.uni-lj.si.

Warmest Regards,

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