

LIFE COURSE AND EVERYDAY LIFE OF OLDER PEOPLE LIVING IN POVERTY

Symposium book

November 28th and 29th, 2024

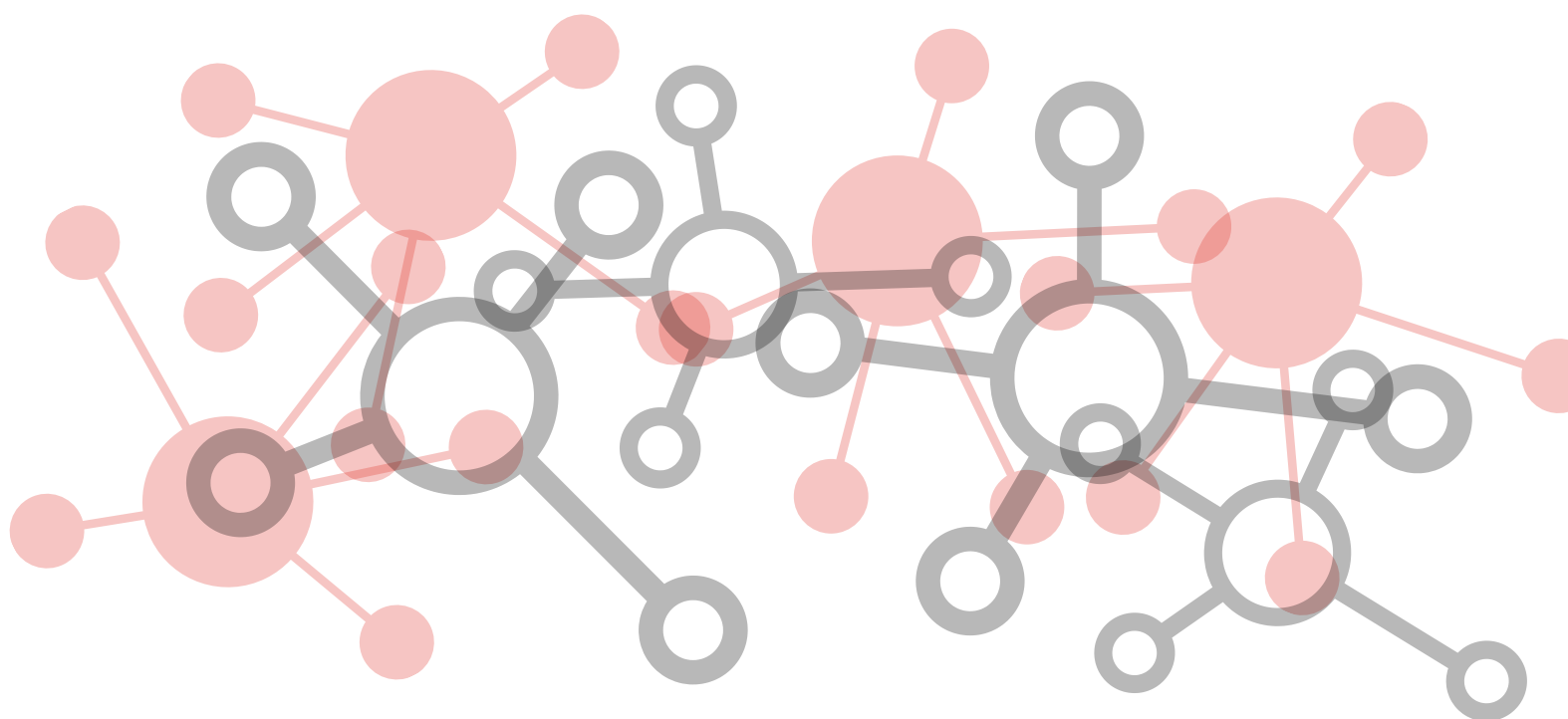
Edited by Vesna Leskošek

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PROGRAMME



Programme – November 28

8.30–9.00	Registration
9.00–9.15	Opening speeches
9.15–10.15	Keynote: Patricia Thane The Diverse Life Experiences of Older People in Britain since 1900. (Moderator Tanja Kamin)
10.15–10.30	Break
10.30–12.00	Panel 1 (Moderator Ana Kralj) 1. Nidheesh Manee Kandiyl. Poverty and Multi-Morbidity in Old Age: An Analysis of Social Pension and Healthcare Programs for Older People in Kerala, India 2. Ayushi Dube and Anindita Chakrabarti. Between Family and State: Elderly Care, Inheritance, and the Generational Contract in the Indian Context 3. Yang Li and Dario Spini. Multiple Jeopardy Intersectional Disparities in Material Deprivation in Switzerland 4. Ana Kralj. “This much you should know: I was less afraid of a snake than of my husband”: Older Women’s Life Stories on Domestic Violence and Poverty
12.00–13.00	Lunch break
13.00–14.00	Keynote: Paul Higgs Social divisions in later life – how do we understand inequalities in later life and how they relate to the transformation of old age in the 21st century. (Moderator Otto Gerdina)
14.00–14.15	Break
14.15–15.45	Panel 2 (Moderator Nina Perger) 1. Mihael Nedeljko and Boris Miha Kaučič. From Discrimination to Poverty – The Economic Situation of LGBTQ+ Older Adults 2. Fevzi Taş. Addressing Social Exclusion and Economic Hardship Among Older Adults: A Life Course Perspective 3. Galina Goncharova, Kristiyan Hristov and Anna-Christina Kainradl. Narrating Intertwined Life-Courses: Economics of Ageing and Intergenerational Relations from the Perspective of Older Bulgarian- and Romanian-speaking adults. 4. Žarko Lazarevič. Faces of rural poverty in Slovenia in the second half of the 20th century

Programme – November 29

9.00–10.00

Keynote: Sanela Bašić Čekić

Gender, Age, and Poverty in Bosnia–Herzegovina: Navigating Challenges from Socialism to Neoliberalism (Moderator Metka Mencin)

10.00–10.15

Break

10.15–11.45

Round table: Lidija Kuzmanov, Nino Žganec, Maja Gerovska Mitev, Majda Hrženjak

Old-age poverty between two political systems: its causes and effects on the gender gap in poverty rates (Moderator Vesna Leskošek)

11.45–12.45

Lunch break

12.45–13.45

Keynote: Rainer Gabriel

Operationalizing the Life Course in Quantitative Research: Developments in data collection, availability and analysis (Moderator Andreja Živoder)

13.45–14.00

Break

14.00–15.30

Panel 3 (Moderator Andreja Vezovnik)

1. Aravinda Meera Guntupalli, Sarah Champagne, Christina Nascimento and Gerhard Kling. Expenditure-based food and fuel poverty among older adults in the UK: Evidence and policy implications

2. Liliya Martynova. Development of social activities to mitigate care poverty

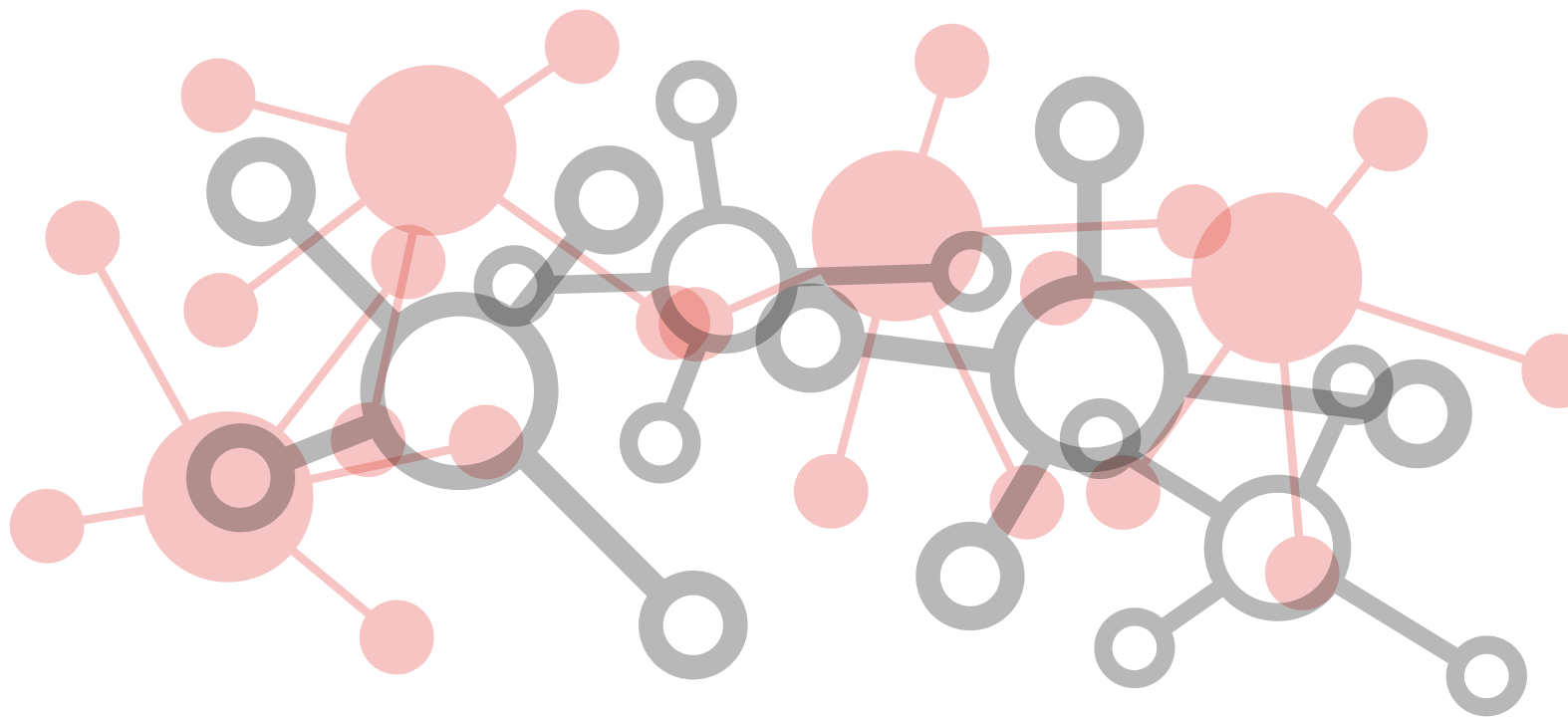
3. Marjeta Benčina, Katjuša Šavc, Ana Kalin and Janja Smrkolj. Energy and transport poverty among older people and women

4. Nina Perger, Tanja Kamin and Jana Mali. Navigating Through Hardship: Practical Strategies for Coping with Poverty in Old Age

15.30

Concluding remarks

KEYNOTE PRESENTATIONS



PATRICIA THANE

Fellow of the British Academy, Visiting Professor in History, Birkbeck College, London; Professor Emerita University of London.

The Diverse Life Experiences of Older People in Britain since 1900

'Old People' are regularly stereotyped as frail dependents, 'burdens' on younger generations, requiring care and contributing little in return. Based on a study of Britain, the country whose history I know best, since 1900, this paper will present a more complex picture. People have always, at least from medieval times 'aged' at differing rates: some fit and active at age 80, others indeed frail in their 50s and 60s and dependent upon 'welfare' from others. In Britain since 1900 life expectancy and years of healthy life have steadily grown, allowing growing numbers to remain active late in life, making important contributions to society including through providing welfare to others through voluntary action and administration of public services. There have always been big socio-economic differences with richer people living healthily and remaining active to later ages than the poor. The paper will explore these differences and the diverse roles older people have played in British society and culture over time.

PAUL HIGGS

Fellow of the Academy of Social Sciences, Fellow of the Gerontological Society of America. Professor of the Sociology of Ageing, Faculty of Brain Sciences, University College London.

Social divisions in later life – how do we understand inequalities in later life and how do they relate to the transformation of old age in the 21st century

This presentation originates in work undertaken with Chris Gilleard on the transformation of old age into later life. Conventional accounts of old age are located within social policy. Old age is seen as an inequality defined by absence from paid employment. For many decades this understanding of later life has remained true, but in current times this unitary approach has become unsustainable given the relative affluence of significant sections of the older population. Social divisions in later life were not only apparent given the distribution of various forms of assets and the transformation of retirement as lifestyle. In this re-configuration, inequalities in retirement are more diverse, and often suggest that the older population are beneficiaries of structural unfairness. This is a hotly debated topic, but the declining significance of old age as a structuring category transforms the debate about inequalities and makes the term social divisions more appropriate.

SANELA BAŠIĆ ČEKIĆ

Professor at the University of Sarajevo, Head of the Department of Social Work.

Gender, Age, and Poverty in Bosnia-Herzegovina: Navigating Challenges from Socialism to Neoliberalism

The paper "Women, Age and Poverty in Bosnia-Herzegovina: Navigating Challenges from Socialism to Neoliberalism" examines the socioeconomic conditions of women in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Dramatic social changes over the past three decades – war over independence, transition to a market economy, and coronavirus pandemic– have triggered three corresponding waves of impoverishment resulting in both an increase in (relative) poverty and a change in poverty patterns/character.

The paper explores an intricate relationship between gender, age, and poverty focusing on the transition from a socialist to a market economy. It examines the socialist era's policies that emphasized collective welfare, including state-sponsored employment, healthcare, and pensions, which significantly reduced general poverty levels and benefited women. However, the shift to a liberalization period brought profound changes, including market-driven policies and reduced state intervention, leading to increased poverty and social inequality among women. It analyzes how the rising unemployment rates, the inadequacy of pension schemes, and the decline in public services quality, have exacerbated the poverty levels among women that shape old-age poverty among women. Finally, the paper proposes policy recommendations to address these challenges, emphasizing the need for targeted social programs, improved healthcare, and sustainable pension systems to mitigate the adverse effects of the transition in old-age women.

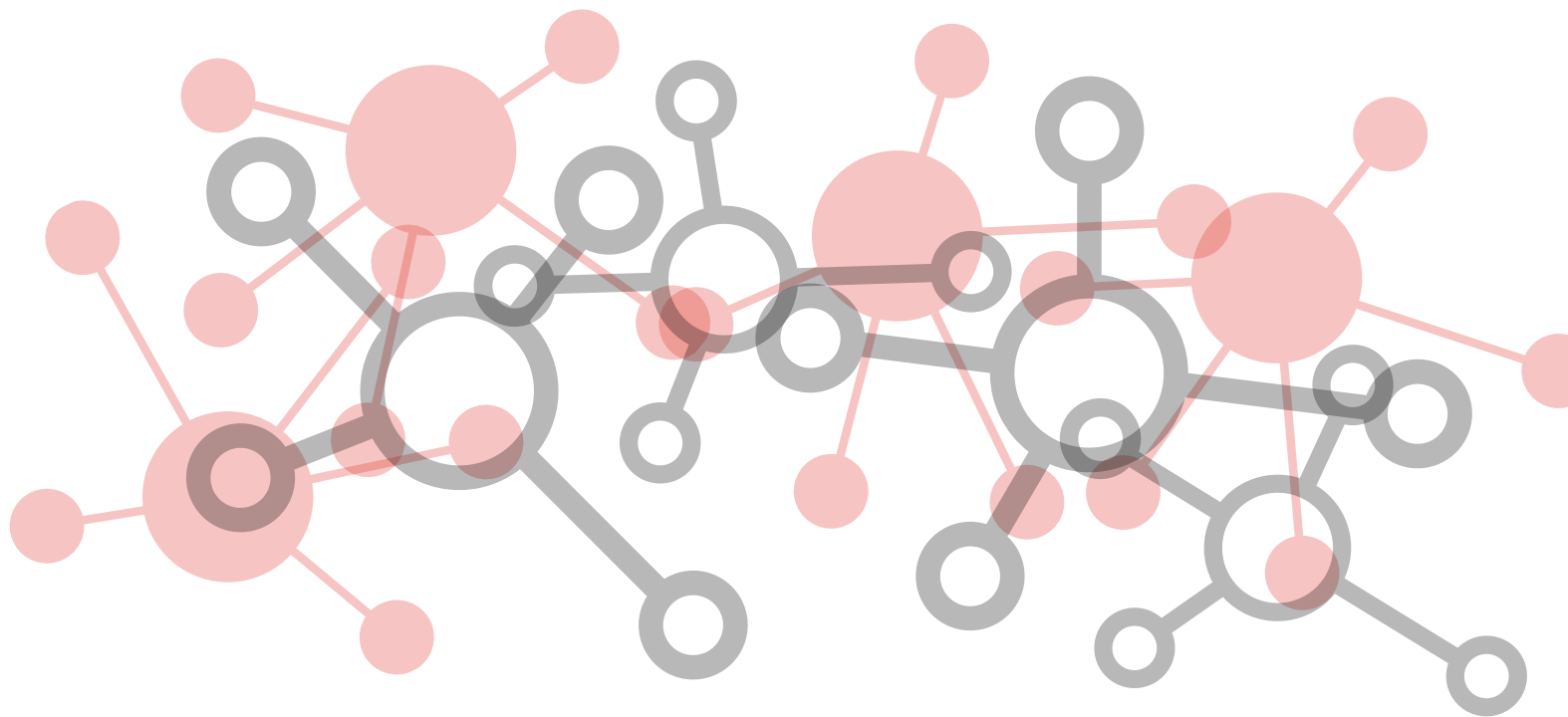
RAINER GABRIEL

Researcher and Lecturer, Zurich University of Applied Sciences (ZHAW),
Associated Researcher LIVES – Swiss Centre for Expertise in Life Course Research

Operationalizing the Life Course in Quantitative Research: Developments in data collection, availability and analysis

Over the past two decades, the life course paradigm has gained substantial traction across various academic disciplines. While qualitative research has a long-standing tradition of examining the life course through biographical interviews, quantitative research remains fragmented, both in data collection and analytical techniques. This methodological contribution addresses recent advancements in these two areas. In terms of data collection, I introduce the life calendar as a tool for gathering retrospective data. I also discuss the increasing availability of high-quality longitudinal datasets and the establishment of harmonization initiatives. Regarding data analysis, current approaches can be categorized into two schools of thought. The first school emphasizes life events and integrates them into outcome analysis using regression modelling. The second school adopts a more holistic approach rooted in statistical data mining, with sequence analysis being central to this method. Developed at the LIVES Centre, sequence analysis is a powerful tool for the analysis of complex life course data. I will explore the theoretical foundations of each approach, discuss their respective strengths and limitations, and provide examples of analyses in the fields of poverty research and epidemiology.

PANEL PRESENTATIONS



Nidheesh Manee Kandiyl

Jagiellonian University, Poland

Poverty and Multi-Morbidity in Old Age: An Analysis of Social Pension and Healthcare Programs for Older People in Kerala, India

By 2050, 20.8 percent of India's population—approximately 347 million people—will be aged 60 or above, a substantial increase from 10.5 percent, or 149 million in 2022 (IIPS and UNFPA, 2023). Social pension and healthcare programs are essential for ensuring well-being in old age. However, despite India's rapid economic growth over the past three decades, this has not led to proportional improvements in access to social security for the older population (Rani et al., 2024). Furthermore, the current right-wing populist government (national level) emphasizes a neoliberal approach to social policy (Gudavarthy and Vijay, 2020), which has ultimately increased the financial burden on state governments (sub-national level) to address the needs of the ageing population.

This paper is divided into two parts. The first part utilizes data from the Longitudinal Ageing Study in India (LASI): Wave 1 (2017-18) to explore poverty and multi-morbidity among older people. The analysis, based on household consumption expenditure, reveals that older individuals in rural areas, women, lower castes, the less educated, widows/separated individuals etc are poorer than others. Moreover, a substantial proportion of older individuals have been diagnosed with multi-morbidity conditions. Given that the ageing experience varies across states, the second part of the paper focuses on Kerala, a southern state with the highest proportion of older people in India, which is also renowned for its robust welfare initiatives. By examining social pension and healthcare programs for older people in Kerala, this paper aims to compare the differences in welfare programs for older people at both the national and state levels. Ultimately, the paper highlights the importance of allocating adequate resources to welfare programs for older people.

Keywords: Poverty, Multi-Morbidity, LASI, India, Kerala, Welfare Programs

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Between Family and State: Elderly Care, Inheritance, and the Generational Contract in the Indian Context

Current policies and laws regarding elderly care in the Indian context emphasize the role of family as the primary caregiver, by enforcing the norm of filial piety as a corollary to inheritance rights. Elderly people are a heterogeneous group—shaped by the intersection of categories such as class, gender, and marital status. Hence, it would be useful to explore critical questions of class, gender, and the role of the modern welfare state that remain inadequately addressed in gerontological research in India. How do concerns regarding maintenance and care in old age affect one's bequest decisions, and how do such decisions translate into the provision of care and maintenance during later years? Further, what about the concerns of those who own little or no property? In a nutshell, who should care for the elderly—family or state? Drawing on an analysis of interviews conducted in the old age homes of Ayodhya, inheritance and maintenance disputes, and narratives of legal actors in the city's district court, and government reports, this study examines the relationship between bequest motives and family support for elderly care. Grounded theory ethnography informed the fieldwork that continued for eighteen months. Findings reveal how the complete testamentary freedom in Hindu law exacerbates the crisis of care among surviving spouses. Further, they illustrate how the interaction between the categories of age and gender informs the generational contract. Finally, by juxtaposing ethnographic insights with the legal-historical literature, the study brings out that, over the years, the disposition of the Indian state has been to shift its responsibility for maintenance and well-being of elderly to the domestic sphere.

Keywords: Elderly Care, Family, Gender, Generational Contract, Inheritance, Welfare State

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² Swiss Centre of Expertise in Life Course Research

Multiple Jeopardy: Intersectional Disparities in Material Deprivation in Switzerland

Material deprivation, “the absence or inadequacy of those diets, amenities, standards, services and activities which are common or customary in society” (Townsend, 1979), offers a direct observation of the shortfalls in standard of living in terms of unfulfilled nutritional, housing, sanitary, and medical needs. Although Switzerland has one of the lowest levels of deprivation in Europe, research shows that deprivation is more prevalent among women, lone households, and individuals with low education in the Swiss context. Material deprivation is linked to a cascade of negative health outcomes, as individuals and households lacking adequate economic resources must forgo important goods and services for financial reasons. Yet, prior research on material deprivation focused on individual determinants, largely neglecting the multiplicative nature of social categorizations, limiting our understanding of material deprivation at the intersection of social attributes. Conceptually grounded in the intersectionality framework, this study estimated the predictive power of five intersectional attributes (age, gender, education, marital status, and nationality) for material deprivation using data from the Swiss Household Panel. Findings show that older single migrant women with limited education were most at risk of deprivation. The study additionally reveals that more than a third of the between-strata variance was captured by intersectional interactions, beyond the additive effect of social attributes, suggesting that these attributes are interdependent. Efforts to alleviate material deprivation and poverty would benefit from understanding the resident population's intersectional identities for more precisely targeted interventions.

Keywords: Material Deprivation, Negative Health Outcomes, Intersectionality, Social Attributes

Ana Kralj

Faculty of Social Work, University of Ljubljana

‘This much you should know: I was less afraid of a snake than of my husband’: Older Women’s Life Stories on Domestic Violence and Poverty

While much research has been devoted to the intersections of domestic violence, age and gender, and much less to the nexus poverty, age and gender, there seems to be almost a blind spot in addressing the intersections of poverty, age, gender and violence. In this contribution, I would like to present the findings of our research on older women’s experiences of social deprivation, poverty and domestic violence over the course of their lives. By applying the life-course perspective approach and conducting the biographical-narrative interviews, we found a number of factors that converged and reinforced each other in the lives of older women living in poverty who were victims of domestic violence: intergenerational transmission of deprivation, low social and cultural capital, parental and/or spousal alcoholism, and a prevailing patriarchal mentality that

Keywords: Older Women, Domestic Violence, Poverty, Life-Course Perspective, Slovenia

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From Discrimination to Poverty – The Economic Situation of LGBTQ+ Older Adults

LGBTQ+ older adults, defined as individuals aged 50 and over who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer (Mayer et al., 2008), experience disproportionately high rates of poverty compared to the majority population. Approximately one-third of this population lives below the poverty line, with even greater disparities observed among transgender and bisexual individuals (Carvalho & Guiomar, 2022).

A lifetime of discrimination in employment, leading to lower earnings and financial instability, is a primary contributor to the economic challenges faced by LGBTQ+ older adults (Bouton et al., 2023). Discrimination, social isolation, and health disparities further exacerbate these challenges. Many LGBTQ+ individuals have encountered employment discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity (Emlet, 2016). Additionally, a significant portion of LGBTQ+ older adults live alone and rely on chosen family rather than biological family for support, increasing their risk of social isolation and vulnerability. In fact, 21% of LGBTQ+ older adults have provided care for friends, more than three times the rate of the general population. This economic insecurity has a direct impact on health outcomes, as LGBTQ+ older adults experience higher rates of chronic illnesses and mental health conditions, further complicating their economic situation (New Report..., 2021).

To effectively reduce poverty among LGBTQ+ older adults, a multifaceted approach is essential, addressing both immediate needs and systemic barriers. Key strategies include increasing funding for LGBTQ+ older adults programs and volunteer care networks, strengthening anti-discrimination laws, promoting social support networks and culturally competent care, increasing data collection and public education campaigns, building a robust advocacy network, and addressing economic disparities through job training, financial literacy, and affordable housing. By implementing these strategies holistically, communities can significantly improve the quality of life for LGBTQ+ older adults and foster an inclusive environment.

Keywords: LGBTQ+ Older Adults, Discrimination, Social Isolation, Poverty, Health Disparities

Fevzi Taş

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Addressing Social Exclusion and Economic Hardship Among Older Adults: A Life Course Perspective

The issue of poverty among older adults is not merely a reflection of current socio-economic conditions but a result of long-term, cumulative disadvantages shaped by various structural inequalities. These include disparities in educational opportunities, employment history, health access, and household composition, intersected with gender, ethnicity, and disability status. Such compounded inequalities leave older adults particularly vulnerable to both social exclusion and economic deprivation.

This presentation will examine how these structural factors, operating over the life course, have systematically marginalized older adults, particularly within the contexts of shifting political systems and economic transitions. It will focus on the critical role that welfare policies play in either mitigating or exacerbating these vulnerabilities. Through a longitudinal analysis, we will explore how historical developments, such as the transition from socialism to capitalism in many regions, have influenced the income security of older adults and deepened existing social divisions.

In particular, the presentation will highlight how social exclusion, in the form of isolation and marginalization from active social participation, exacerbates the economic hardships faced by the elderly. Many older adults not only suffer from income insecurity but are also deprived of the social networks and community engagement that can serve as buffers against poverty.

By identifying key structural and cultural factors that have perpetuated these disadvantages, this discussion aims to offer insights into policy measures and social interventions needed to address both the economic and social exclusion faced by older adults. The ultimate goal is to suggest ways to foster greater inclusivity and economic resilience for aging populations, ensuring that poverty in old age is not an inevitable outcome of past inequalities.

Keywords: Old-age Poverty, Social Exclusion, Economic Inequality, Life-Course Perspective, Welfare State, Structural Inequalities

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² Center for Interdisciplinary Research on Aging and Care (CIRAC), University of Graz

Narrating Intertwined Life-Courses: Economics of Ageing and Intergenerational Relations from the Perspective of Older Bulgarian- and Romanian-speaking adults

Economics of aging are influenced by multiple structural, representational and individual factors. To better understand the intersection of structural inequalities and statuses of older adults it is important to focus on their multiple interconnected experiences and reflections of aging as well as on their references on socio-economic possibilities, supportive networks and care relations.

We aim to connect narratives of older adults in Bulgaria and older Romanian-speaking older migrants aged in Austria on their reflection of aging in specific social, historical, and generational contexts of change. Which images of aging and normative implications can be revealed in analyzing their narratives of life and old age? To what extent do migration experiences or/and experiences of social transformations (de)stabilize and (re)affirm these images and implications? How do the narrators negotiate supportive networks and intergenerational relations against the backdrop of socio-economic questions?

Keywords: Aging, Intergenerational Relations, Migration

Žarko Lazarević

Institute of Contemporary History, Ljubljana, Slovenia

Faces of rural poverty in Slovenia in the second half of the 20th century

The establishment of the communist regime and the introduction of a central planning system put agriculture and peasants in a new situation. Agricultural policy after 1945 was based on economic, social and political discrimination against peasants, which had a long-term impact on the economic situation of agriculture and thus on farmers' living standards. The aim of agricultural policy in the first period was to eliminate peasants as a social class. In the second period the idea was to limit them politically, socially and economically within a narrow production framework. The first period dominated until the mid-1960s, the second for the next twenty years. The number of peasants population decreased in the post-war decades due to urbanization, i.e. the transition to the industrial and service sectors, and from the 1960s also due to emigration abroad. From the mid-1950s, a gradual liberalization of the private agricultural sector took place. They were granted the right to private land ownership (admittedly limited to 10 ha), they were recognized as a legitimate economic entity with the right to pursue their own economic interests. They were allowed to modernize technologically, participate independently in the market and a more favorable tax system was introduced. This went hand in hand with the social emancipation of the peasants under the communist regime. Late, but nevertheless, they were given the right to health, pension and disability insurance. Several decades of economic and social neglect of private farming had consequences. As early as the 1960s and even more so in the 1970s, they were confronted with the growing extent of rural poverty. The presentation describes the context, the extent and the measures taken to curb rural poverty (integration into the welfare systems, regional policy).

Keywords: Rural Poverty, Economic Inequality, Welfare State, Slovenia

Aravinda Meera Guntupalli,¹ Sarah Champagne,¹ Christina Nascimento,² Gerhard Kling³

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² Office for National Statistics, UK

³ Business School, University of Aberdeen, Scotland

Expenditure-based food and fuel poverty among older adults in the UK: Evidence and policy implications

Older people in the UK are often assumed to be a homogenous group with better financial stability than younger adults due to stable pensions and increased rates of home ownership. During the cost-of-living crisis in the UK, it has been highlighted that 20–25% of adults reported food or fuel insufficiency. However, there has been an inadequate understanding of multidimensional poverty among older adults in the UK, especially concerning food and fuel dimensions. Understanding food and fuel poverty among older people is paramount for older people to maintain good health and well-being. Using the Living Cost and Food Survey 2021/2022 expenditure data, our analysis considers the association between food, fuel and income poverty among older adults aged 65 and above. Our results suggest that the poverty experience among older adults is diverse and heterogeneous. While older females face a higher risk of income poverty, solo-dwelling older males show high food and fuel vulnerabilities. The complexity of multidimensional poverty amongst older adults is particularly concerning amidst the non-conducive policy environment in the UK, including the recently announced fuel payment cuts for older adults during the ongoing cost-of-living crisis.

Keywords: Food Poverty, Fuel Poverty, Multidimensional Poverty, Older Adults, Cost-of-Living Crisis, United Kingdom

Liliya Martynova

Department of Social Sciences and Philosophy, University of Jyväskylä, Finland;
Centre of Excellence in Research on Ageing and Care, Finland

Development of social activities to mitigate care poverty

Care poverty is a form of deprivation that includes personal, practical, and socio-emotional domains (Kröger, 2022). In the context of population ageing, coupled with the increase of single households, changes in cultural traditions, and social and economic stresses, it is prudent to address these needs effectively and cost-efficiently. The development and further expansion of social activities in every locality, which cater to older adults' diverse needs and interests, including sports, leisure, and volunteering, is an effective and cost-efficient solution.

Based on the analysis of a database covering 2,366 social projects targeting older adults from various Russian regions and cultures and different abilities, I offer a typology of social activities. Among them are several socially beneficial types that aim to provide help and support to others, such as volunteering. Similar activities can be seen in various European countries, including Finland or Germany.

The analysis of my data revealed social activities targeting older adults in need at home or in institutionalised care facilities. They were provided with targeted help; simultaneously, such activities showed local issues of the care system and older adults in economic and care poverty who could not use paid care services and maintain a comfortable living. Besides, during COVID-19, social connections built due to engagement in social activities helped to develop mutual support and help; it was more effective than some decisions made by local authorities.

The state can promote social activities through the system of grants, help with facilities and equipment for meetings and events, and related legislation. From the welfare state perspective, social activities can help mitigate different forms of poverty while strengthening social cohesion, identifying and mitigating social issues such as gaps in social services and lack of resources, and improving the personal well-being of participants.

Keywords: Care Poverty, Social Activities, Social Engagement, Older Adults, Volunteering

Marjeta Benčina,¹ Katjuša Šavc,¹ Ana Kalin,² Janja Smrkolj³

¹ Focus Association for Sustainable Development

² Forum for Equitable Development

³ Sopotniki Institute – an organisation for intergenerational solidarity

Energy and transport poverty among older people and women

While stricter environmental policies are necessary to decarbonize the transport and energy sector and address climate change, they can also have a negative social impact on vulnerable groups who are unable to afford the green transition due to their low income in combination with other vulnerabilities and might additionally be affected by energy or transport poverty. In this paper we will present preliminary results of the analysis of the quantitative survey and the analysis of the in-depth interviews, with a focus on older people, especially women. These will serve as a basis for the next steps of the project ZENPRE – Reducing Energy and Transport Poverty, namely information and empowerment of people experiencing poverty as well as advocacy and networking activities with the aim of systemic regulation in this area. The aim is to determine the extent to which personal circumstances, particularly gender and age, influence energy and transport poverty and the link between the two forms of poverty.

In order to analyse the understanding of the relationship between energy poverty and transport poverty, we will conduct a quantitative and qualitative analysis. For the qualitative analysis, the project partners will conduct 18 in-depth interviews with individuals, single people and families at high risk of poverty, differentiated primarily by gender and age. However, previous research by the project partners and other national and European research has shown that other personal circumstances such as place of residence (urban, rural), household type, particularly in relation to gender, migrant status and ethnicity, can also influence the results. For this reason, other personal circumstances are also recorded in the in-depth interviews, with the focus on gender and age-differentiated data in all of them. At the same time, a quantitative analysis will be carried out on a sample of 1,500 people from the Slovenian population to help determine the extent of the two forms of poverty and their overlaps. This survey will also collect data broken down by gender and age, as well as the place of residence and household type.

Keywords: Transport Poverty, Energy Poverty, Green Transition, Vulnerable Groups, Women, Elderly, Systemic Regulation

Nina Perger,¹ Tanja Kamin,¹ Jana Mali²

¹ Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Ljubljana

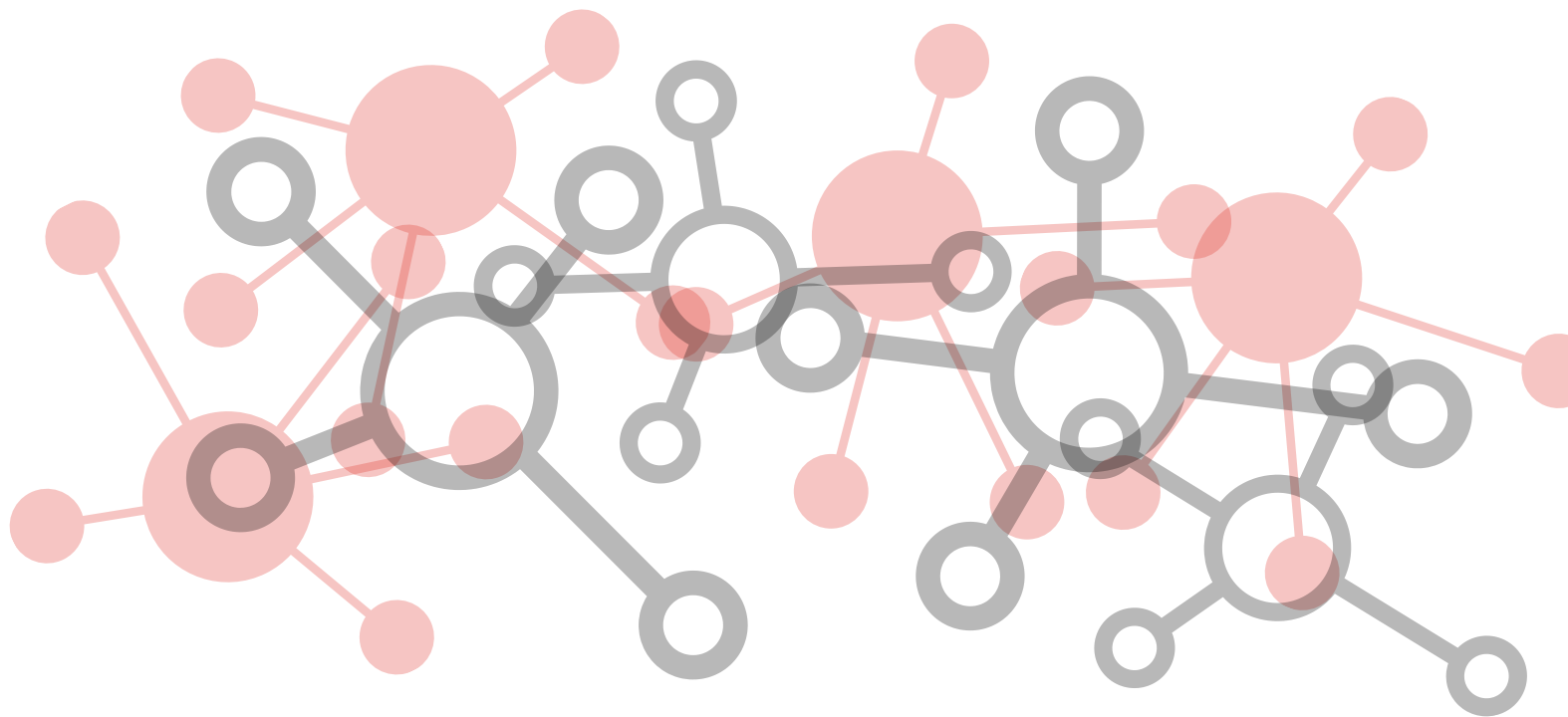
² Faculty of Social Work, University of Ljubljana

Navigating Through Hardship: Practical Strategies for Coping with Poverty in Old Age

In the presentation, we aim to analyse practical strategies that older individuals living in poverty rely on to navigate the social world and everyday life. Drawing on Bourdieu's theoretical framework, we consider practical strategies as particular forms of engagement with and orientation to the world, where this engagement and orientation are themselves framed within and by the so-called "positional suffering" that result from the low social position of older people. Building on qualitative empirical data, we distinguish between various practical strategies. Strategies that relate to the primary formation of a habitus of necessity include the adjustment of one's aspirations to what is achievable and realisable, and one's needs to what is necessary, as well as and learned self-sufficiency. The strategies related to living under conditions of necessity include a particular orientation towards the world – the so-called *amor fati* –, as well as dispositions towards cost-consciousness, to prioritize by sacrifice, to relentless prioritization, to stringent conservation, disposition of preparing and anticipating additional adversities, and, finally, to "work with what you have". Additionally, relational aspects of subjective practical strategies for navigating through hardship include relying on both primary and secondary sociability. The results highlight older people navigating through hardship as knowledgeable agents in the Bourdieusian sense, endowed with practical knowledge forged in tensions and under the weight of the world, that is, of objective conditions of living in poverty.

Keywords: Poverty, Old Age, Practical Strategy, Habitus of Necessity, Slovenia

ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION



**Lidija Kuzmanov,¹ Nino Žganec,² Maja Gerovska Mitev,³
Majda Hrženjak⁴**

Vesna Leskošek (Moderator)

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Old-age poverty between two political systems: its causes and effects on the gender gap in poverty rate

Old-age poverty is a problem in most European countries and beyond. It is a challenging area of research because poverty in old age manifests itself as an accumulation of inequalities over the life course. It is usually interpreted in the context of a person's employment history and their relationship to the labour market. Interrupted employment histories have an impact on lower pensions, which are particularly low for women because they have had a more varied and precarious employment history. Eurostat data from 2019 for European Union countries show that the gender pension gap is extremely high in some places, e.g. 44% in Luxembourg, around 40% in the Netherlands and Malta, 36% in Germany, etc. Research also shows that pensions are only a partial answer to the problem of old-age poverty, but that the problem is much broader. Life course studies point to other dimensions of poverty and gender differences. For example, socialisation processes, cultural norms, educational pathways, care work and other factors can lead to poverty.

The study of poverty in the countries that once belonged to the same federation, i.e. Yugoslavia, is characterised by a change of political system. This is extremely interesting for sociology because many things happen at the time of the transition that change people's lives. Even during socialism, there were quite big differences between the countries of the former Yugoslavia, but they had quite similar structural frameworks. After the political changes, however, there were also differences in this respect because different political, economic and social regimes developed in this area.

Since the generations now retired are those who worked under socialism and retired under capitalism, their social status in old age has certainly changed as a result of the transition. In this roundtable with guests from Serbia, Croatia, Macedonia and Slovenia, we will discuss old-age poverty from this historical perspective. We will look at the causes of poverty in old age, which is now also quite high in these countries, with the poverty gap between the sexes being particularly wide.