

Ageing.

Strand organiser: Emily Freeman, London School of Economics

Intergenerational social support: a double-edged sword?

Valeria Bordone, University of Mannheim

In the current world of population ageing, the debate about elderly care is of extreme importance. Although it has been argued that in modern societies the role of the family might face a crisis, older parents still receive a substantial amount of social support from adult children. Rich evidence suggests that closer family ties positively affect health in old age through the provision of several kinds of support. Yet, there might be a limit to the improvement of elderly persons' well-being, due to "too much" social support resulting in feelings of dependency. In this study, I examine the link between three types of social support (informational-appraisal, emotional and instrumental) from one source (the adult children) and the locus of control of older parents. In the empirical analysis, I apply fixed effects regression models to panel data from the English Longitudinal Study of Ageing (ELSA), an interdisciplinary source representative of the English population aged over 50. The sample analysed includes 7,193 people. The results show a curvilinear relationship between children's support of the parent and locus of control of the latter, net of the selection in support due to changes in health conditions. Social support provided by adult children seems to be beneficial for parents' sense of control at moderate levels but the downward concavity suggests that "too much" support is associated with lower control. Since the different dimensions of support act in a cumulative way, this study would suggest balancing them in order to couple support and well-being in old age.

Email: ybordone@mail.uni-mannheim.de

Factors affecting receipt of support from children for older people in two Nairobi slums

Jennifer Baird, Gloria Chepngeno-Langat, Maria Evandrou, Jane Falkingham, University of Southampton

This paper investigates the receipt of support from adult children amongst older people living in the Nairobi slums, and how that receipt varies according to a range of factors. Four types of support are explored: financial support, support with household chores, support with health care and other forms of support. The paper uses data from a population-based survey of 2,505 older people aged 50 and over who have at least one surviving child. Findings indicate significant differences in the propensity to receive support according to the older person's living arrangements, health status, ethnic group and number of surviving children. The likelihood of receiving support is also found to vary according to whether the older person is in receipt of support from other relatives or belongs to a self-help or welfare group; with those who receive support from these sources also being more likely to receive support from adult children. This highlights both the importance of social networks in later life support and also calls attention to the existence of a sub-group of vulnerable older people who are not in receipt of support from formal or informal sources.

Email: Jennifer Baird jsb305@soton.ac.uk

Demographic change and the acceptance of intergenerational-transfer policies. A comparison of 13 European countries

Harald Wilkoszewski, Max Planck Institute for Demographic Research; Elena Muth, Rostocker Center for the Study of Demographic Change

In light of population ageing and changing family structures across most of Europe, as well as the expansion of intergenerational-transfer policies (e.g. in the area of childcare), the question arises, how demographic change affects the future design of the social state. This paper therefore aims at analyzing preferences of different demographic groups with regard to transfer-related social policies in 13 European countries. It is based on data from the International Population Policy Acceptance Survey (IPPAS 2003) and focuses on attitudes towards 13 family policy reforms, which cover all dimensions of public transfers to the younger generation (money, time, education, housing). The main questions of interest to our analysis were: Do policy preferences differ across age, between parents and childless people, and between married and unmarried people? The results of the multivariate logistic regression models identify a clear effect of age, parenthood, and marital status for most countries under study. Strong age effects are found especially for policies providing financial assistance to families, parenthood has a significant effect on policy preferences across all transfer types. In general, the elderly are less in favour of public transfers to the young than the younger generation and prefer public transfer channelled to the older generation. Further, childless people are less in favour of public transfers to the young and more in favour of public upward transfers than parents. The role of marital status is slightly less pronounced. In the case of financial transfers to families, being married increases the odds to support these policies, whereas regarding care policies the effect is mostly reversed. Generally, all effects found appear to be stronger in Northern and Western European countries as compared to Eastern Europe and Cyprus. Among the Eastern European states, Poland, Hungary and at times also the Czech Republic are closest to their Western counterparts.

Email: wilkoszewski@demogr.mpg.de

The role of private finance in paying for long term care

Les Mayhew, Cass Business School; B. Rickayzen, Cass Business School; Martin Rickayzen, Technische Universität Darmstadt

An ageing population and increased longevity means that long term care will become progressively more expensive. In 2009 the Government published a Green Paper (and since a White Paper) on future funding options. This article considers the role of private finance products under the 'Partnership' option. It finds that few households are able to pay for LTC based on income and savings but the number increases if housing assets are included. We show that products could be devised for a range of circumstances, although state support would need to continue. We propose a simplified and fairer means testing system based on a combination of income and assets.

Email: lesmayhew@googlemail.com

Socio-demographic and health related factors associated with declining self-rated health among older adults in Europe: a longitudinal perspective

Georgia Verropoulou, University of Piraeus & Centre for Longitudinal Studies, Institute of Education, University of London

The study aims to explore factors related to declining self-rated health such as socio-demographic characteristics, health indicators and risky health behaviours at baseline as well as changes in physical and mental health occurring between the two waves of the Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe (SHARE). Data and methods: The data used in the analysis come from release 2-3-0 (December 2009) of waves 1 and 2 of SHARE. Wave 1 of the survey was carried out in 2004 in 11 European countries representing Scandinavia, Central Europe and the Mediterranean; the target population was persons aged 50 or higher. The second wave of the survey was conducted over 2006-2007. The longitudinal sample in the present analysis comprises 18,458 persons who were successfully re-interviewed in wave 2; attrition rate between the two waves was estimated at 27.9%. The importance of factors associated with SRH was assessed using logistic regression. Results: The findings indicate that female gender and higher educational attainment are associated with lower chances of worse self-rated health. The numbers of chronic conditions and of somatic and depressive symptoms at baseline are also very important. More significant, however, seems a worsening in physical and mental health between the waves and health problems related to heart attacks, strokes and in particular, cancer. Risky health behaviours such as smoking, drinking and obesity, on the other hand, have mostly weak associations. The results also show a differentiation according to SRH level (from “excellent” to “poor”) at baseline.

Email: gverrop@unipi.gr

Determinants of older people's engagement in work, active leisure and social participation: A European comparison

Giorgio Di Gessa, LSHTM; Emily Grundy, LSHTM; Anne Jamieson, Birkbeck, University of London

Background Various international bodies (EU, OECD, WHO) are promoting the concept of “active ageing”: it is believed that involvement in both work, active leisure and social activities promotes healthy ageing but there is limited knowledge on interactions between participation in different forms of activity or possible influences of national context. For example, older people in paid work may be less likely to engage in activities such as volunteering. Competition between or accumulation of activities may vary between countries due to institutional and cultural differences. We use data on four European countries (Denmark, Italy, France and England selected to represent different welfare regimes) drawn from two parallel European surveys, the Surveys of Health and Retirement in Europe (SHARE) and the English Longitudinal Study of Ageing (ELSA) to analyse personal, familial and institutional characteristics associated with older people's activity (work, formal and informal social involvement and family relationships). Methods Only participants in the cohorts who were aged 50-69 at baseline were included. Variables associated with each separate activity of interest were identified using logistic regression. Results (in progress) Analysis to date shows large differences between countries and by demographic, socio-economic and health related characteristics in participation in the activities examined. For example, in general the more highly educated had higher levels of participation in paid work but there is some indication that this association varies by country.

Email: Giorgio.DiGessa@lshtm.ac.uk

Well-being and place-attachment of older adults in the Northern Netherlands

Louise Meijering, Debbie Lager, University of Groningen

Older adults have built up attachments, both positive and negative, to different places throughout their lives. Important places may be, for instance, the parental home, attended secondary school, college town, favorite holiday country, or comfortable armchair. With ageing, a decrease in physical and mental abilities may deteriorate access to different places. A sense of belonging to meaningful places may be relived through memories, rather than through visiting them. Photographs and significant objects that are kept in the home place serve to keep these memories alive. It has been argued that attachment to place increases well-being in old age (Wiles et al. 2009). Feeling 'in place' can increase an older person's well-being, and with that his/her quality of life. The objective of this paper is to explore how older adults in the Northern Netherlands experience their well-being in relation to place attachment. Its focus is on attachment to places at various spatial scales, such as the building (home), street, neighbourhood and village. Central questions are 1) to which places do Dutch older adults feel attached? 2) how do they perceive that their attachment to these places affects their well-being? To answer these questions, I draw on qualitative life-history interviews with older adults who live in the North of the Netherlands.

Reference: Wiles, J.L., Allen, R.E.S., Palmer, A.J., Hayman, K.J., Keeling, S. & Kerse, N. 2009. Older people and their social spaces: a study of well-being and attachment to place in Aotearoa New Zealand. *Social Science & Medicine*, 68 (4): pp. 664-671

Email: l.b.meijering@rug.nl

Beyond 90 together; telling our stories

Jennifer Rea, Anne Murphy, Susie Rea-McDowell, Maeve Rea, Queen's University Belfast

Most of us know mothers or grandmothers, who have reached 85 and over. We also know family clusters where more than one family member has reached their 90th year. Scientists consider that genes influence long life, clinicians wonder why some live long without major illness and sociologists wonder if behaviours and cultures have an important influence. This study presents the self-reported life stories/narratives of 90 year old sibling pairs/trios enlisted as part of EU-funded Genetics of Healthy Ageing (GeHA), in 4 European countries. Sibling pairs were asked to 'tell their life story' and answered some structured questions about their survivor hood, family inheritance and if being siblings over 90 years helped their coping. Photographs were also taken. Themes were identified using 'grounded theory' methodology. Sibling pairs considered that genes and life style influenced their longevity. They demonstrate positivity/optimism, a feisty independence, adaptability and a self-deprecating sense of humour as their personality characteristics. Relationships with their living siblings showed few 'intimate' supportive dyads with most sibling pairs demonstrating an independent but 'congenial' relationship, though sibling 'rivalry' was also present at 90. This study gives a 'voice' in text and image to the self-told life stories from some the 90 year old siblings. The positivity/optimism, feisty independence, adaptability and a self-deprecating sense of humour seem to dominate their personality characteristics. Are these characteristics primarily genetic or are they cultural or are the two inextricably intertwined? The old debate of 'nature' or 'nurture' emerges with respect to the personality profiles and the 'successful ageing' phenotype.

Email: i.rea@qub.ac.uk

Involving older people in improving their well-being

Martin Hoban, WRVS, Peter Beresford, Brunel University, Jennie Fleming, De Montfort University

The evidence indicates that we urgently need better ways of involving older people if they are to play a part in improving their own well-being. The three-year participatory UK Big Lottery funded action-research project, which is the focus of this proposal, provides an opportunity to achieve this. It will support older people to define and develop measures of their well-being; identify innovative ways for older people individually and collectively to improve their own well-being; provide the evidence base and tools needed for WRVS and other providers to transform the support they offer to improve older people's well-being; and for all providers, commissioners and policy makers to put well-being, as defined by older people, at the centre of their work. The proposals will explore how by developing creative, proactive and mutually supportive approaches the project aims to help older people remain active members of strong communities and reduce their need for high intensity services. This is vital given the increasing needs of an ageing society, ever tighter resources for state support and recent equalities legislation. WRVS and its academic partners will develop the pioneering approaches based on user participation paying particular attention to groups facing especial barriers to participation. Findings will help promote a culture shift towards a human rights based approach to understanding well-being and tools to deliver it, offering benefits to the wider UK older population

Email: Namita.Srivastava@wrvs.org.uk

Ageing + Migration = Vulnerability? A case to the contrary

Julia Schonheinz, Elisabeth Schröder-Butterfill, University of Southampton

Socio-demographic research on ageing has increasingly examined the impact of migration on older people's welfare and support networks. The basic tenor of such research is often that older people are 'left behind' by younger migrants, and that the very conditions encouraging outmigration by the young (poor economic prospects, inadequate state welfare, weak civil society) also add to the vulnerability of older people in sending communities. We examined old-age support arrangements among a German minority in Romania, who had experienced dramatic outmigration to Germany in the 1990s, leaving a severely distorted age-structure among the remaining population. Childlessness and small local but significant transnational kin networks characterise the study population. Contrary to expectations, we found little evidence of vulnerability among the older population. However, old-age security was less a function of remittances and other transnational family support, as has been documented in other studies of migration, but of strong local networks that emerged transformed out of long-standing ethnic institutions (including the Lutheran church) and inter-ethnic relationships. The paper draws on qualitative research (interviews, participant observation) conducted in Transylvania, Romania, in 2008.

Email: emsb@soton.ac.uk
