

## Abstracts

### THEME 1: An Index For Active Ageing

Anastasia Emelyanova (University of Oulu, Finland)

*Circumpolar dimension of population ageing: cross-regional analysis towards optimal policy adjustments*

In my interdisciplinary thesis I focus on the Arctic. As this region undergoes significant changes, its demographic face also alters, apparently 'ageing'. The thesis comprises 5 scientific papers geographically devoted to the Russian North, the Barents Euro-Arctic region, the North-Atlantic, and the North-American part. The last paper has been approved as a book chapter on selected policy topic, namely "Policies in Arctic countries to promote volunteering in old age". The methods incorporate traditional United Nations indicators on ageing as well as recently known 'prospective' measures (Sanderson & Scherbov). The latter looks into people's characteristics beyond their chronological age, such as changes in remaining life expectancy and improved health. I look for cross-territorial dynamics of ageing over recent decades, comparing standard vs. prospective calculations and defining variations in the context of demographic, social, economic, and political history of each area out of 28 arctic municipalities.

Active ageing seems to be a prominent contemporary framework in which I can find the solutions/insights for many theoretical and practical questions that I ask in my current and future academic work. In particular, I would love presenting for the session on Social Policy and Demographics, learning more about the Index for Active Ageing, and critical visions of this approach. This can help constructing more evidence for policy planning towards ageing healthily and actively in higher latitudes.

Almar Kok (Free University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands)

*Educational, occupational, and income inequalities in a longitudinal index of Successful Aging*

**Background:** Since socioeconomic position (SEP) is linked to a myriad of physical and psychosocial outcomes within the same individuals, the concept of successful aging provides an important area within which to study socioeconomic inequalities. Our study presents an examination of the independent impact of education, occupation, and income on a 16-year longitudinal measurement of successful aging (SA).

**Methods:** Data from 2095 participants aged 55-85 in 1992 in the nationally representative Longitudinal Aging Study Amsterdam (LASA) in the Netherlands were employed. As a composite measure of SA we used the SA-index, developed in earlier work. This index includes nine indicators of physical, cognitive, emotional, and social functioning, for which subgroups of respondents with similar trajectories were distinguished by employing Latent Class Growth Analysis.

**Results:** Results showed that older adults with higher education, occupational skill level, and income had higher numbers of successful aging trajectories. Overall, inequalities by education were largest, followed by income and occupational inequalities. For some indicators, SEP inequalities were not only present at the first observation, but continued to develop over the course of old age. Results also indicated that lower SEP-groups were not disadvantaged in all aspects of successful aging, especially psychosocial functioning.

Lien van Malderen (Free University Brussels, Belgium)

*Broadening the scope of Active Ageing: introducing Active Ageing in the nursing home*

Active Ageing (AA) is a right of all. Therefore, our research aims to broaden the AA-scope to nursing homes (NH), by translating and implementing AA in this setting. First, a qualitative study with focus-groups (NH-residents; children of NH-residents; communitydwelling elderly; experts) and thematic analysis explored what AA entailed in NH. Nine AAdeterminants were identified: Culture, Behaviour, Psychological Factors, Physical Environment, Social Environment, Economical Factors, Care, Meaningful Leisure and Participation. Second, interventions to enhance NH-residents' QoL were systematically reviewed, identifying 35 interventions. All could be assigned to the AA-determinants. Effects on QoL were not systematically present. Third, a questionnaire for NH-residents measuring

the current realization of AA was developed. The questionnaire was administered to 263 residents of 44 NH, 71% of the AA-functioning was estimated as reached, ranging from 64% to 78% for the determinants separately. There was a positive relationship between QoL and experienced AA ( $r=.39$ ;  $p<.05$ ). Finally, an AA-RCT is initiated. Since participation of residents is a key AA-factor, the intervention regards Participatory Action Research (PAR). NH-residents recommend how the NH can improve, by observing the NH-operation, identifying problems and making suggestions. PAR aims to improve the residents' QoL, their empowerment/autonomy as well as the AA-functioning of the NH.

Moritz Hess/Elias Naumann (University of Mannheim, Germany)

Population Ageing, the Intergenerational Conflict and Active Ageing Policies – a multilevel study of 27 European countries

In this paper we critically review existing theoretical explanations for an intergenerational conflict over welfare resources. We examine both the perception of the generational conflict and whether interests actually differ between the generations. The perception of the conflict is measured with three questions on the relationship between the young and the old generation. As for the interests we focus on spending preferences for typical, age-related clientele policies such as spending for old age or spending for education. Our results show a moderate conflict between generations. Compared to spending preferences of the younger generation, older people are more likely to support increased spending for old age at the expense of educational spending. The existence of a generational conflict in spending preferences seems to be unrelated to the perception of the generational conflict. In a final step of our analysis we evaluate the efficacy of existing generational policies to mitigate the generational conflict. As measurement for such generational policies we use the Active Aging Index (AAI). Results show that the higher countries score on the AAI, the less people perceive the relation between the generations as conflict.

## THEME 2: Retirement

Giulia Dalla Nora (University of Bologna, Italy)

*Couples retirement decisions. The case of Italy*

Most of the scientific literature has considered institutional factors (pension and labour market policies) and individual characteristics (gender, age, level of education, employment status) as the most important dimensions affecting retirement decisions. Less attention has been paid to the couple and to how the couple relationship influences retirement decisions. On this regard, many studies have shown that retirement decisions are taken within the couple in a weave of compromises and mutual influences.

The aim of this paper is to improve understanding of the factors that influence retirement decisions in Italy, considering that the institutional context and the individual characteristics influence retirement decisions that nevertheless occur within the couple. For this reason pull, push and stay factors have to be considered as embedded in couple-related decisions.

The sample for the analysis is drawn from SHARE (Survey of Health, Aging and Retirement in Europe), wave 2 and wave 4. I plan to use socio-demographic variables (e.g. sex, age, marital status, education) and variables on employment (e.g. work status, firm size, years spent working, part-time work). As dependent variables, I will include pension age, the reason for retirement, the reasons for staying at work and expected retirement age.

Ellen Dingemans (Netherlands Interdisciplinary Demographic Institute, The Hague, The Netherlands)

*Bridge employment in Europe: A multilevel question*

Paid employment after retirement is often investigated from an individual-level perspective. Institutional differences in the incentive structure of the pension climate across countries are hardly considered in this field of research, even though it is widely known that the retirement process is largely shaped by the institutional context of welfare states. In the current study, I take a multilevel approach to address this issue and investigate how several aspects of the pension climate impact individual-level employment behavior after retirement. Based on data from the fourth wave of the SHARE project including information on 16 European countries, the findings show that the more generous a pension climate is, the less likely older adults are to work in post-retirement employment. This result seems to be intuitive, since a more generous pension climate

means that the need to work to foresee in welfare in old age is decreased. However, it contrasts individual-level findings which indicate that it is not so much the financial argument that motivates older adults to extend working lives after retirement. Instead, I find predominantly higher educated individuals to work after retirement, suggesting the continuation of work for intrinsic motives. Implications for further research and policy development are discussed.

**Karen Hanley (University of Brighton, UK)**

*The Competition between the Labour Market and Retirement for Danish Employees*

Objectives – to:

- present some qualitative findings from interviews with Danish employees (60+)
- consider work as an active ageing agent, pulling employees away from retirement.

Interviews (2014) with Danish employees, explored enablers and hindrances to staying in employment. Semi-structured interviews used Clean Language; employees told their working life story as their journey into later life working. Retirement did not feature as a dominant factor, or as an either/or decision, each interview showed positive aspects of being in work. A primary strand of the findings was the lack of preparing, investigating retirement even after some thought by the older Danish worker. A second strand is the strongly felt 'contract' with the labour market, holding these employees in work.

The working life course appeared as a series of opportunities taken advantage of, creating highly skilled employees. Danish employment practices include discussion of retirement in the annual appraisal meeting, however employers have not created succession plans, so is later life working accidental, because retirement has not yet been planned?

Possible conclusions:

- national retirement planning, together with increased financial and life planning literacy may lead to retirement at a younger age
- realistic retirement choices/decisions being based on people's individual understanding of their personal motivations.

**Moritz Hess (University of Mannheim, Germany)**

*Rising Preferred Retirement Ages in Europe*

Increasing life expectancies and decreasing fertility rates are threatening the financial sustainability of Europe's pension systems. In response, policy makers have introduced reforms of the pension systems and the labor markets to delay retirement. Besides the actual retirement behavior of the current pensioners, these reforms will also affect future pensioners' preferred retirement age. Country studies show that they have adjusted to reforms and increased their preferred retirement age. The paper provides an overview of the rise of the preferred retirement age in Europe, and, in addition, researches whether certain groups of older workers have shifted their preferences stronger than others. Data derived from the Eurobarometer 60.2 (2003) and the fifth wave of the European Social Survey (2010) are used for the analysis. Both surveys include the exact same question on the respondents' preferred retirement age, making a comparison in twelve European countries possible. The results show that the preferred retirement age has increased in all twelve countries. A strong increase was found in countries with a liberal welfare state, while it was weak in the Nordic and Southern countries. Highly educated workers increased their preferred retirement age stronger than those with average and low education.

**Stefanie König (University of Mannheim, Germany)**

*Career Histories and Job Characteristics as Influence on Retirement Timing in Germany, Denmark, and Sweden – a Gender Perspective*

Studies on retirement timing often ignore gender aspects. Studying influences on retirement timing of women, however, becomes more important in the discussions on sustainable pensions. Typically, women retire earlier than men but live longer, which makes them an important focus group. Countries with comparatively low gender gaps in employment can also be expected to have lower gender gaps in retirement timing. Therefore, I compare Germany, Denmark and Sweden, where gender equality is very different. Additionally, I plan to investigate job characteristics which have been proven to affect retirement timing, but without consensus about the different importance for men and women.

I use retrospective data from SHARELIFE to investigate the timing of employment exit. Career characteristics and previous job characteristics are the main explaining variables. Clear gender

differences regarding job characteristics are found. While they are more important for men in Denmark and Germany, the opposite seems to be true for Sweden. Regarding career histories, lower career attachment rather leads to lower exit ages in Germany and Denmark, but not in Sweden. The importance of job characteristics seems to be gendered and depending on the country context.

**Anna Mutwill (University of Hannover, Germany)**

*Retirees' Life Satisfaction: A Systematic Review of Longitudinal Studies on Pre-Retirement Determinants*

The retirement transition is meanwhile mostly perceived as a process with both detrimental and beneficial aspects rather than a limitable event evoking a life crisis in general (e.g. Alpass & Paddison, 2013). Detected determinants of life satisfaction around retirement can be assigned to broader categories (see Wang, Henkens & van Solinge, 2011) and likewise classified in terms of the stage of the process they consider. In order to look more closely on pre-retirement circumstances providing the starting point of the retirement transition, we performed a systematic review of international longitudinal studies on pre-retirement determinants of retirees' life satisfaction, that have been published within the last ten years. We find the twelve selected studies to differ most considerably in the compilation of determinants measured, the times of measurement and the accuracy of provided methodological information. In our selection retirement transition-related variables, namely retirement planning and choice over retirement, as well as pre-retirement job-related variables emerged as the predominantly investigated and most significant determinants of post-retirement satisfaction. Implications for further investigation are discussed, for instance on the basis of the interplay between economic and psychosocial determinants suggested by our results.

**Elisa Szulganik (University of Frankfurt, Germany)**

*Changing labour market opportunities for elderly: Economic downturns, retirement system reforms and the age of retirement in Germany.*

Recent retirement system reforms in Germany increased the average retirement age. Fewer possibilities to retire early are the most important changes: Elderly people can still retire before the age of 65 but only by cutting their retirement benefits, men and women have to retire at the same age and partial retirement is not supported any more. Considering less employment options for elderly people generally and during economic downturns for all age groups, as well as less options for early retirement, the consequences of economic downturns for elderly are unclear. How do economic downturns and retirement system reforms affect the possibilities to participate actively at the labour market till the retirement age and the retirement itself? First analysing representative survey and administrative data from labour administration and social security services, event history models show that economic downturns have an impact on retirement age. Economic crises weaken the effects of social policy reforms for women, less educated and unemployed old aged. They are more affected by early retirement during economic downturns. Hence employment options for elderly are even worse during economic downturns and the lack of labour market opportunities forces them into early retirement, which leads to unintended benefit cuts and a higher poverty risk. This is also supported by sequence analysis models on survey data from the German Socio-Economic Panel (SOEP). Summing up, Germany has to face new needs of elderly people in the future – for those who want or have to work longer as well as for retirees.

### **THEME 3: Resilience**

**Daniela Craveiro (University of Minho, Portugal)**

*Health Inequalities and Active Ageing: exploring qualitative and qualitative perspectives*

Health inequality it's not just a matter of numbers. It can also be expressed in the way how certain social groups relate to dominant discourses, such as Active Ageing. This presentation focuses on the association between social disadvantage and health conceptions, by combining qualitative and quantitative perspectives.

Health accounts of twenty-eight Portuguese older adults were collected, using semi-structured interviews. All participants presented a multidimensional understanding of health causality, yet the different social positioning was expressed in the ways how the structural and agency factors are perceived as health-relevant. Social participation and social relations are less valued by the social disadvantaged group.

Data from SHARE survey was used in order to establish to what extent different socioeconomic class interacts with the influence of such dimensions. Social disadvantage relates to worse health assessments and lower gains from social connectivity.

Active ageing discourses associate social participation to a healthy and positive attitude to life. But resources and how those resources are valued place certain groups in disadvantage to meet this new "standard" for ageing. The implications of these findings are discussed considering the centrality of active ageing concepts in the public discourses on health and ageing.

**Anne Göttert (University of Frankfurt, Germany)**

*Ageing: Subjective perception of ageing using the example of workers in the care of the elderly*

In regard to the changes in the demographic structure of modern societies and the change in the retirement laws in Germany, the discussion about the possibilities for companies and politics of how to make sure that older workers can go on working until retirement, are gaining an increased importance. Most often the subjective perspective of older workers is being left out. Therefore this paper focuses on the subjective awareness of older workers of their ageing concerning their jobs. It is important to get to know if older workers do think that their ageing is actually a problem and which aspects of ageing are possible problems or have potential for a positive change of their working situation. Due to the high amount of physical and psychological stresses and labor turnover, and the increasing meaning of their work in modern societies, workers in the elderly care are chosen as a sample for guided interviews in that area. First results show if and how elderly care workers experience their own ageing as a problem in regard to their work, and where there might be opportunities for a change to be able to work until retirement.

**Marcela Petrová Kafková (Masaryk University, Brno, Czech Republic)**

*The fourth age: the identity of disability during the period of active aging*

The fourth-age population is a population seriously underrepresented in the research, even as all of the fears of ageing, of individuals and the entire population, in fact concern the period of the fourth age. The fourth age is typically studied from the standpoint of health care provision and its quality; the sociological viewpoint is often missing. The dominance of the concept of active ageing in the professional and public discourse brings the risk of exclusion of those who are unable to fulfill it; therefore a revision is necessary in respect to the capabilities and needs of individuals in the fourth age. The experience of transition into fourth age presents its own specific topics, associated with the weakening of agency and forcing individuals to reconstruct their identity and redefine the social roles they fill.

The main goal of my project is a description and exploration of the population in what we call fourth age; that is, individuals in advanced age, in a stage of life often associated with disability and limited self-sufficiency. I will also focus on an explanation of the meanings that people ascribe to their own ageing.

**Paula Vasara (University of Jyväskylä, Finland)**

*Refuting or complying with expectations: perceptions of moving in old age*

The question of ensuring possibilities for wellbeing in old age have become ever more pertinent as possibilities for financing and organizing public universal services are currently under scrutiny. New kinds of divisions of responsibilities and provisions of services are being proposed in graying societies struggling to make ends meet. In Finland, growing old at own homes is widely supported, but there have begun to appear tentative studies questioning this unilateral policy emphasis; especially as decreasing public services targeted at enabling continuing living at home mainly concentrate on ensuring only the physical health and safety of older persons, thus leaving little room for acknowledging other aspects of wellbeing.

The data consists of interviews gathered in MOVAGE Moving in Old Age: Transitions in Housing and Care research project. Narrative analysis is employed to study the question of to what extent these narrators perceive their recent relocation as means of complying with, and sharing responsibility for, wellbeing defined by the expectations of active ageing. Is moving depicted as acting in accordance with, or as an attempt to refute, the normative understandings underlying the policy of ageing in place and active ageing?

## THEME 4: Critical Perspectives

Catherine Crum (University of Chester, UK)

*Widowers, Masculinity and Dinner for one*

Does bereavement and loss of a partner have a direct impact on older men's concepts of masculinity and quality of life with a specific focus on how they prepare and consume food and their subsequent risk of malnutrition?

Charlton (1997) suggests that older men, particularly when compared with older women, cope on average less effectively with the domestic activities (food preparation and eating) of living alone after bereavement. Bennett et al (2003) suggest that bereaved older men do develop coping strategies over a period of time to address specific issues of being without a female support role i.e. a wife. This in part can be attributed to a conflict between perceived male role tasks and perceived female role tasks, putting at risk the framework of masculinity that both society and the wife have helped to maintain throughout the man's married/ adult life.

This study utilises constructionist grounded theory to examine the potential emergence of gender role strain (Pleck, 1995) within the context of food preparation and eating alone after bereavement, with a particular emphasis on the reduction of risk of malnutrition. Semi- structured interviews, combined with food diaries and Older People Quality of Life scale (Bowling, 2011) and malnutrition scale MUST (Bapen, 2013) were used to better understand the themes of eating alone and whether food habits change in relation to quality of life and concepts of masculinity.

Elena Fronk (University of Maastricht, The Netherlands)

*Contemporary Accounts of Online-dating in Later Life*

50+ online-dating is on the rise. While dating seemed to be preserved for the young in the past – at least in common understanding – dating in later life has become culturally intelligible and, indeed, an important cultural practice. My project takes the intersecting themes of age and love as starting point to explore central questions about contemporary cultures of aging: How is (the quest for) love in later life imagined, experienced and understood? How does online dating, as a cultural practice, play into conceptualizations of love and later life? How do these practices and conceptualizations relate to consumerism, and the ideals of self-fashioning and self-fulfillment? This chapter illuminates these questions through the perspective of older online daters. How do they make sense of love in later life, and their search for it? It analyzes how age and gender are done by older singles and how varying "truths" about love and dating are produced through their accounts. Age is considered as a crucial difference, with complex effects on both, women's and men's position in the dating market, which I seek to interrogate critically. To this end, older singles' conversations in online dating discussion forums are investigated by means of positioning analysis.

Ignacio Madiero-Cabib (University of Lausanne, Switzerland)

*Active Ageing in Switzerland: A Study on the Determinants of Extending Occupational Activity and Voluntarism of Late Retirement*

Switzerland, as many other European states, is a country where public policies that promote late retirements from the labour market are increasing. However, this scenario does not imply that every worker currently tends to retire late; nor does it imply that those who retire late do so voluntarily. Based in a life course approach, this article aims first to study the determinants of retiring late, and second to analyse whether the decision to postpone retirement is made voluntarily or involuntarily. Both objectives are addressed by relying on data from the Swiss survey Vivre/Leben/Vivere. By using logistic regression modelling, results indicate that, whereas self-employed and higher educated individuals are more likely to retire late, people from intermediate occupations and workers who benefited from economic growth periods tend less to retire late. Moreover, individuals who are more likely to opt for voluntary late retirement are Swiss citizens and also persons who benefited from promising economic periods, while self-employed, divorced and widowed individuals, and people with secondary or technical educational level tend to involuntarily leave the labour market late. The conclusion discusses the absence of social inequality debate in the design of active ageing policies.

Tatiana Sedláková (Masaryk University, Brno, Czech Republic)

*Social representations of women ageing*

The study is a contribution to the knowledge of interpersonally shared meanings, which are carried by the aging process of women. The work is rooted in social constructivism and use lifespan and life-course perspective. Dialogical and structural approach of the theory of social representations was used as a tool for increasing sensitivity in exploring these

meanings. The aim of the work is to illustrate the ways of creating and disseminating these meanings. The research objective is to capture shared beliefs, values and experiences that women attach to this process by the methods of participating observation, analysis of free associations and semi-structured individual interviews. The research sample was created by the members of Brno (Czech Republic) civic association named "Ženy50" which focuses on the personal development of women after the age of fifty and their involvement in creating a harmonious society. Data analysis was realized by means of thematic analysis in the case of free associations and by use of principles of grounded theory in the case of individual interviews. The findings point at two main topics: The importance of alternative representations of aging women in a public space. The possibility of dynamic shaping of aging representations and the potential for intervention focused on support of activity in an ageing process as a meaningful choice.

**Anna Wanka (University of Vienna, Austria)**

*(Dis-)Engagement in Public Space - Elderly Urban Residents and the Social Practices of Going Out*

While disengagement theories of ageing might unleash lurid imaginaries about elderly persons who never leave their apartments until they die (unnoticed), activity theories promote third-age lifestyles entailing voluntary work, lifelong learning and physical fitness. In my PhD project I propose that these contrastive theories correspond to the public-private-dichotomy. Research suggests that going out into public space is life-course-dependent, declining in quantity and changing in quality in later life (Wahl et al., 1999; Ziegler, 2010; Tesch-Römer et al., 2010). With the promotion of active ageing, the private sphere is contesting, prompting the issue of a 'right to privacy' in older age from a different angle. In my PhD research I approach the question why some older adults are more engaged in, some more disengaged from public space(s). Following a practice-theoretical approach (Shove et al., 2012), I analyse the material elements, competences and meanings of engagement-practices in public space with a focus on the role of images of ageing and generational conceptions of privacy. Methodologically, I deploy a mixed-methods research design in which quantitative data analysis (survey and municipality data) is deepened by qualitative case studies (structured inspections, episodic interviews, non-participant observations) in Vienna.

## **THEME 5: Social Policy & Demographics**

**Emma Garavaglia (Catholic University Milan, Italy)**

*Investigating the quality of older workers' working lives: the case of a large Italian company*

Work is a core activity in society as it is central for individuals' inclusion and active participation (Kalleberg 2009). Encouraging longer working lives and maintaining work ability is one of the key elements relevant to active ageing policy objectives, as employment represents a condition for older individuals' empowerment and full participation in society (Sidorenko, Zaidi 2013). Employers and managers play a central role in keeping more seniors in the labour market and in promoting longer work careers (Vickerstaff et al. 2003). Based on these premises, the paper investigates the quality of older workers' working lives, compared to other age-groups, by presenting an age management initiative implemented within an Italian large company. The paper presents the results of a survey on the total workforce (about 4.000 workers) of the company and the results from a qualitative analysis (100 workers) aimed at deepening the most critical issues emerged from the survey. The survey is based on the implementation of the Quality of Ageing at Work Questionnaire (Marcaletti, Garavaglia 2014) – an age management tool, already tested, built on the key elements of the Workability questionnaire (Ilmarinen 2004) – aimed at supporting employers and managers in promoting inclusive workplaces for workers of all ages.

**Åsmund Hermansen (Fafo, Oslo, Norway)**

*The effect of work-continuation bonus on retirement timing –retaining older workers in Norway*

Faced with a rapidly aging labor force, increasing the labor supply of older workers has become an important goal for European countries. Offering a work-continuation bonus to older workers with the option of withdrawing a contractual pension (contractual early retirement pension AFP) has become a widespread retention measure in Norwegian companies. The aim of this article is to examine whether offering a workcontinuation bonus impacts the relative risk of withdrawal of a contractual pension. By using a difference-in-differences approach and data for the period 2000–2010, the analysis shows an overall average increase in the relative risk of a 61- or 62-year-old worker retiring on the contractual pension in the period under consideration. However, among older workers employed in companies offering a work-continuation bonus there has been a decrease in the relative risk. The effect of work-continuation bonus is evident both before and after controlling for selected individual and company characteristics.

Laure Kaeser (University of Lausanne, Switzerland)

*Confronting Active Ageing with Empirical Evidence: a Structural Equation Model Approach. The Case of Elderly Migrants Living in Switzerland.*

This article discusses the relationship between contemporary ageing norms and elderly practices. Active ageing has become a normative and cognitive framework for many of the current ageing policies. International organizations have largely contributed to raising and promoting this notion as an antidote to population ageing and the associated risk for pension and health systems. At the intersection between norms of ageing well, gerontologic theory, and political rhetoric, active ageing has rarely been empirically tested. This article aims at confronting Swiss political ambitions related to active ageing with the living conditions of the elderly. We give a particular focus on ageing migrants, who are overrepresented among disadvantaged populations. Our results come from the survey Old Age Democratization? Progress and inequalities in Switzerland / Vivre-Leben-Vivere (VLV), which deals with the living conditions and health of individuals aged 65 and above currently living in Switzerland. Using a structural equation model, this article identifies configurations of activities and their explanatory factors to better understand the determinants structuring access to active ageing. We show that the normative approach of active ageing does not embrace the diversity of activities practiced by elderly. Above all, the injunction to active ageing eludes socioeconomic inequalities at the retirement age.

Mariska van der Horst (University of Kent, UK)

*Employment patterns of older individuals in the UK*

There is increasing social and scientific interest in the working lives of older individuals. In many industrialized countries there is an ageing demographic which puts existing pension schemes under pressure and leads to a rise in pension age and a call for individuals to extend their working lives beyond state pension age. We know, however, relatively little about what the current working lives of older individuals look like. To get a better view on this, it is important to map what older individuals currently do. This paper will look at the employment pathways of older individuals (defined in this paper as 50+). The pathways include the states full-time and part-time employment or self-employment, nonemployment, and/or death. Using ELSA-data and a type of sequence analysis, individuals are followed for ten years. A cluster analysis will be performed to see whether pathways can be summarized in a limited number of pathway types. Finally, we try to explain pathway types with background variables such as educational level and gender to see to what degree there are structural differences between certain groups in the pathways they take. Together, this paper will give more insight into the working lives of older employees.

David Wright (University of Brighton, UK)

*How have employment transitions changed for older workers in Germany and the UK*

At the end of the 20th century pension schemes were becoming unsustainable due to increased life expectancy and the growth of early retirement during the recessions of the 70s/80s. Since the Lisbon European Summit in 2000, Governments have sought to reverse early retirement and increase State Pension Age. Extending working life remains a major issue for the UK government which reported only modest improvement "compared to many nations"<sup>1</sup>. The most widely accepted cross-national analysis of early retirement by Ebbinghaus and Hofäcker<sup>2, 3</sup> predicted that liberal welfare states regimes like the UK would react faster than conservative ones like Germany. However, Labour Force Surveys suggest Germany reversed early retirement faster than the UK. Despite this, the UK still has a higher proportion of people working after pension age. Recent research by Loretto and Vickerstaff<sup>4</sup> has shown that the "cliff-edge" retirement transition is being replaced in the UK by a more "messy" gradual retirement within which gender plays a significant role. The presentation will use cross-national analysis of longitudinal panel surveys to compare the employment transitions of older workers looking at gender, occupation and changes in employment with age such as switching from full-time to part-time or employment to self-employment.

Ge Yu (University of Bremen, Germany)

*Working Pensioners in China*

From a social inequalities perspective, this article examines determinants of work (paid employment) beyond pension age in China. Specifically, it focuses on individual and family characteristics of working pensioners, and the relevant institutional settings, such as retirement and pension policies. For the analysis, 2011-2012 national baseline survey data of the CHARLS

(China Health and Retirement Longitudinal Survey) were utilized. Key finds were: being male, in good health, self-employed or being a firm's employee all had a positive effect on remaining in work or re-entering the labour market after retirement. By contrast, being female, especially in combination with having grandchildren below the age of 6, and receiving generous pension payments had a negative effect on the probability of working. Results further revealed that continued work did not mean greater choice but an obligation to finance old-age. Reforming the current fragmented pension system was discussed, which would be a first step towards less inequality and poverty in old-age.