



Ageing in Europe

Newsletter

Issue 29, Autumn 2020

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Oana Ciobanu
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Editorial Board

Message from the Coordinator of the Network



Dear Colleagues

Welcome to the autumn newsletter of the ESA Research Network on Ageing in Europe.

I am delighted to confirm that our midterm conference will be taking place in January 2021, on an online basis. We have over 130 registrants for the conference and look forward to hosting an informative and enjoyable event. It would have been lovely to meet participants in person in Finland. Nevertheless, the online format will provide an excellent opportunity for interaction and knowledge exchange. I should like to extend thanks to our co-organisers, The University of Jyväskylä and CoE AgeCare who have facilitated such a smooth transition from our initial plans to the online arrangements. Further details on the conference are available here:

<https://www.jyu.fi/en/congress/ageing-europe>. (The programme will be finalised shortly.)

Message from the coordinator

We are very grateful to our contributors to this edition of the newsletter. In this issue insights into 'Researching Ageing. Methodological Challenges and their Empirical Background' are provided by the book's editor, Maria Łuszczńska from Pontifical University of John Paul II in Kraków, Poland. This text addresses the need to enrich methodological insights in gerontology. In addition, Silvia Klockieters offers details on her PhD that was recently completed with VU University of Amsterdam (VUA). This study addressed ageing in a migration context, with a focus on resilience among Turkish and Moroccan immigrants. We present an overview of a research project 'The impact of COVID-19 on nursing homes in Italy', conducted at the Polytechnic University of Milan, Italy. Also featured is a call for papers for a 'Transforming Care' conference, scheduled to take place in June 2021.

Please don't hesitate to contact us if you have any queries about our Network activities or outputs. In our next Network newsletter, in February/March, we will be reporting on our midterm conference. We will also be producing a special edition of the newsletter next summer that will focus on current PhD studies on ageing in Europe.

With best wishes,



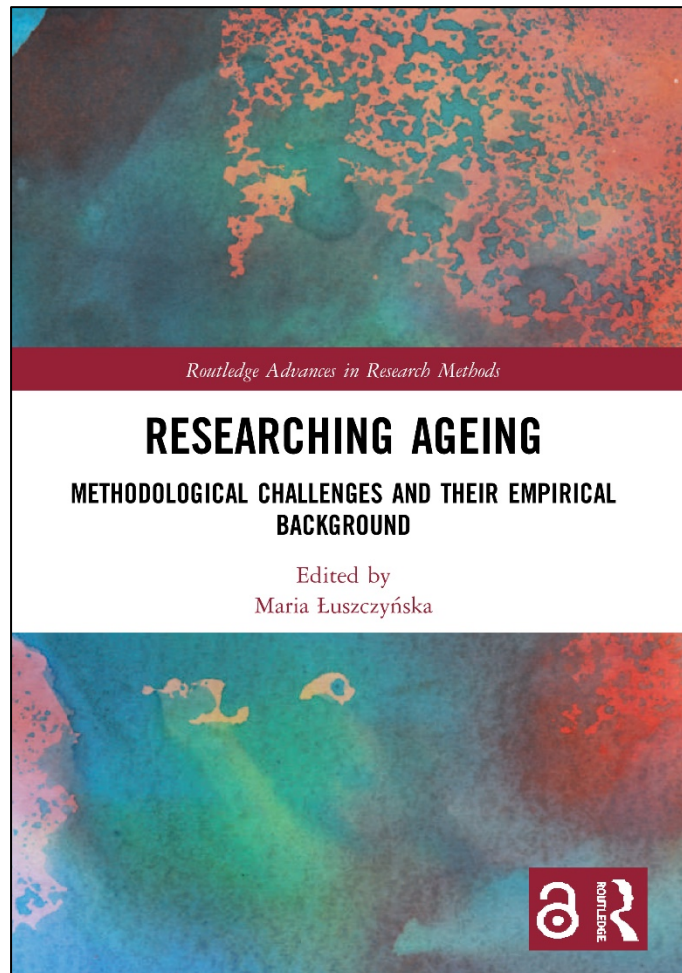
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Book - Author's Insights

We are happy to present an overview of the newly published book "Researching Ageing. Methodological Challenges and their Empirical Background" by the editor, Maria Łuszczynska.



Building contemporary gerontology through the search for unique research methods

By: Maria Łuszczynska, Ph.D.

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It is helpful to place the newly published Researching Ageing within the broader field of scientific publications. The dynamic process of global ageing stimulates gerontological studies on ageing, old age, and the elderly, but it also calls to answer the fundamental questions about the subject and methods of research. The idea for this book was born from the need to enrich and disseminate such methodological insights in gerontology. Therefore the book presents chosen methods such as evidence-based practice, experimentation, life-story interviews, longitudinal studies, cross-sectional studies,

and within-person change studies, material culture studies and science and technology studies (STS), participatory action research (PAR), participatory peer research (PPR), population health intervention research (PHIR), qualitative narrative gerontological approach (QNGA), self-reported scales and more in the context of implementation and reflection.

The book consists of four parts and twenty-four chapters preceded by an introduction. The first part shows the specificity of ageing research in the context of other areas of knowledge such as law, philosophy, economics, and touches upon issues related to interdisciplinarity and transdisciplinarity in gerontological research. The second part presents various research perspectives, as mentioned above. The third part focuses on the implementation of research outcomes. The authors show the importance of using the outcomes for improving the life quality of older adults in terms of health and social well-being. Using the example of specific research projects and programs, they show how to practically use the research results to implement solutions that contribute to elderly persons' lives. The last part of the book emphasizes older adults as a source of knowledge. Authors analyse the situation of participatory research, where older persons also become researchers. There are also examples of ageing studies on different groups of people – with impaired communication skills, living in rural areas, less educated, living in care institutions, and finally, on carers of the older adults. The

considerations end with an attempt to reflectively look at the methodology of ageing research, both in terms of its wealth and future development prospects.

Gerontology is still developing, and the field seeks to produce its own unique conceptual and methodological apparatus, often by adapting research instruments used in other scientific fields. The book distinguishes between research on old age (describing the situation of the elderly), research about old age (as a global phenomenon with medical, psychological, social, political, economic, legal, and other aspects) and research for old age (analyses designed to prevent negative effects of old age in the long term). Gerontology is thus challenged not only to study the phenomenon of ageing itself but also to take account of its consequences and to link it to various social dynamics such as employment, intergenerational dialogue, social inclusion, exclusion, and education.

The main purpose of the publication is to show the diversity of methodological aspects of ageing research and position such research in a discussion about which of the main methodological paradigms more effectively and reliably capture the phenomenon of ageing. This goal fits into the ongoing dialogue between researchers who employ qualitative and quantitative paradigms. The publication's objective is not so much an exchange or confrontation of these two approaches, but rather an exploration of their coherence and

complementarity and of the conditions that allow for their reconciliation.

The book presents research on ageing from different points of view. For example, it includes general interdisciplinarity reflections on the subject of research itself – i.e., old age, older adults, the process of ageing, and various ways of understanding age. We also consider particular approaches, methods, and tools for researching ageing and old age, illustrated with practical applications. Many authors highlight the importance of a practical perspective in ageing research, including issues related to the implementation of the research findings. Finally, the book also discusses various sources of knowledge about old age, e.g. older adults' perspective and the broad context of their functioning.

The anticipated audiences for the book are researchers and theoreticians of the phenomenon of old age, as well as representatives of various fields of knowledge, such as sociologists, demographers, psychologists, economists, lawyers, pedagogues, other social scientists, and medical professionals, including young researchers.

The book has been co-created by almost 50 authors from 11 countries around the world whose social locations constitute a fairly expansive map. Among these “locations” – understood as

both the terrain where studies have been performed as well as the terrain for scholarly, cultural, and social reflection – are Norway, the United States, Turkey, Portugal, Brazil, New Zealand, Canada, Ireland, South Africa, India, Chile, Australia, France, Germany, Sweden, Greece, the United Kingdom, Poland, Italy, the Netherlands, Taiwan, France, Japan, Israel, Austria, the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China, rural China, and Belarus.

The book is published via open access, with its authors' hope that the dissemination of their conclusions would reach a broad scientific audience around the world.

Researching Ageing. Methodological Challenges and their Empirical Background.

Edited by Maria Łuszczyńska,
Routledge / Taylor & Francis, 2020
<https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003051169>



Silvia Klokgieters

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Silvia Klokgieters did her PhD-research at the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam between September 2014 and December 2018 and defended her thesis on January 9th, 2020. She now works as a postdoctoral researcher at the Amsterdam UMC. She focuses on topics of resilience, older migrant health and socioeconomic inequalities in older adults.

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Ageing in a migration context: Resilience among Turkish and Moroccan immigrants

Youssef was born in a small town in Morocco and his family was poor. At the age of 20 he decided he wanted to go to Europe to find work there and make a better life for himself. When he arrived in the Netherlands, everything was different. The living conditions were poor and he worked long hours in a factory.

In the years that followed, he decided to live with a Dutch family and he later joined a football club. This helped him learn Dutch relatively quickly, and he functioned as a translator between his co-workers and the factory staff. It was not long before his skills were noticed and he was given the opportunity to get schooling, thereby improving his labour conditions.

Youssef is now over 65 and retired. He is healthy, married and has children and grandchildren. Although he still wishes to one day return to Morocco, he is happy in the Netherlands and he is proud. Proud of his achievements and migrating to the Netherlands.

Youssef is one of the individuals who migrated to the Netherlands in the 1960s and 70s. For many of these immigrants, the idea was to stay and work in a Western European country for a number of years, and return years later to the country of origin (de Haas & Fokkema, 2010). However, many immigrants stayed in the country of settlement and are now spending their latter decades of life. In the Netherlands this holds true for about fifty-five thousand Turkish and fifty-two thousand Moroccan immigrants aged 55 and over, a number that is expected to double within the next twenty years (Statistics Netherlands, 2017).

Older immigrants often age with relatively adverse mental and physical health outcomes compared to their native age-peers (El Fakiri & Bouwman-Notenboom, 2016). The combination of experiencing migration and occupying a minority position in the country of settlement is associated with a culmination of risk factors for poor health in older age. Risk factors include having a low socioeconomic position, having to deal with

language barriers, and dealing with experiences of discrimination and segregation (Ciobanu, Fokkema, & Nedelcu, 2016). However, unlike many of his fellow countrymen and women, Youssef aged relatively well and is still healthy. Such variability in ageing outcomes begs the question: Why do some individuals age in relatively good health and wellbeing despite adversity and others do not?

In my thesis, I investigated resilience among Turkish and Moroccan older adults. Resilience can be defined as 'the process of effectively negotiating, adapting to, or managing significant sources of stress or trauma. Assets and resources within the individual, along with their life and environment facilitate this capacity for adaptation and 'bouncing back' in the face of adversity' (Windle, 2011, p. 11). More specifically, I investigated which resources immigrants used in order to age in relatively good health and with relatively high wellbeing. Resources pertain to any action that can help individuals to fend off adversity and reach positive outcomes.

In my thesis I have used two data sources. First, I used two samples derived from the Longitudinal Ageing study Amsterdam (LASA). One sample consisted of 269 adults born in Turkey and 209 adults born in Morocco collected in 2013-2014 both aged 55-64 years. The second sample consisted of 1,023

native Dutch older adults also aged between 55-64 years. Second, I collected 23 life stories of Turkish and Moroccan immigrants between the ages of 60 and 69 years old. I conducted semi structured interviews in collaboration with two bilingual research-assistants who acted as interpreter. All Interviews were conducted in Dutch, Turkish, Moroccan Arabic (Darija) or Berber language (Tarafit).

In this piece I would like to highlight four important findings that exemplify resilience among older Turkish and Moroccan immigrants. First, when I studied at what position immigrants placed themselves in the societal hierarchy, I confronted participants with a picture of a ladder and explained to them that the ladder represented society and the steps represented hierarchical positions in that society. When I asked them where they would place themselves, I found that many immigrants placed themselves on middle and higher positions because they felt they had successfully migrated and settled in a new country. Thus, older immigrants tended to view themselves in light of the adversity that they had overcome, rather than the economic or educational merits they had achieved. This in itself is an example of resilience.

Second, when I compared immigrants with native older adults against the same risk factor, immigrants do not necessarily fair

worse than their native counterparts. More specifically, when I investigated the degree to which immigrants develop disability from displaying a low gait speed, which is an important risk factor for disability, I found that Moroccan immigrants developed disability in similar ways as native Dutch peers. As such, while immigrants often experience worse outcomes, they can still display similar resilience against risk factors as their native age peers.

Third, I found that the usefulness of resources could vary for different adversities. For example, when investigating the protective qualities of religious activities, I found that while private religious activities in general were positive for the wellbeing of immigrants, they were negative for the wellbeing of immigrants when conducted in the absence of other physical, social and socioeconomic resources. Thus, the role of religious activities is ambiguous and does not always contribute to individuals' resilience.

Fourth, I found that the usefulness of resources could also vary across the life course. Immigrants who focused mainly on fulfilling short term goals such as enjoying freedoms in the Netherlands and going out to parties, fared relatively well when they were young, but were often not so well off in older age. Vice versa, when immigrants who were more focused in

achieving long term goals such as having a family or getting promotions (in the example of Youssef) were often much better off on older age.

To conclude, I found that resources that aid resilience stretch across micro-, meso- and macro domains and were influenced by chronological life course. Resources useful to the immigrants at one point in time may not necessarily be useful at other points in time. In my study, resources that promote resilience included being educated, dealing with language barriers, having two incomes, making life meaningful, strong social and community networks, and the ability to sustain a transnational lifestyle i.e. traveling back and forth to the country of origin. In addition, having more resources across various micro-, meso- and macro domains was more favourable than having less resources in only one domain. In order to enhance immigrants' resilience policymakers should, thus, focus on improving the quantity and quality of resources across multiple domains at once rather than focusing on one resource in particular.

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Project Overview

The impact of COVID-19 on nursing homes in Italy

Italy has been the first western country strongly hit by the Covid-19 outbreak. WHO did not proclaim Covid-19 as a “high global risk” until February 28: on that same day, Italy already had 888 official infected persons, 345 hospitalized covid-19 patients, 105 patients in intensive therapy and 21 deaths.

In this context, Italian nursing homes were probably the first residential institutions in the western world that had to deal with the pandemic. The diffusion of the infection and the huge number of death due to Covid-19 in such institutions became visible and alerted the public opinion and policy makers only one month after the process started to happen: a strong delay in the capacity of the system to acknowledge the problem that had a tremendous impact in terms of number of deaths especially among frail older people.

In the search for possible causes, in this paper we investigate what the structural situation in such institutions was before the beginning of the epidemic. The underlying hypothesis is that

policy legacy factors, coupled with the strong pressure on the health system exerted by the very quick spread of the outbreak, have played an important role in the way nursing homes have (poorly) dealt with the pandemic. The lack of public knowledge about the spread of the virus in these structures, and the weak response they could give to the pandemic, are to be seen as the result of the poor development of long-term care policy in Italy, and of the marginality of such institutions within such system.

You can download the full paper [here](#).

Marco Arlotti and Costanzo Ranci
Polytechnic University of Milan, Italy



Call for Papers

Transforming Care Conference

5th Transforming Care Conference – Venice
Time in Care: The Temporality of Care Policy and Practices
June 24-26th 2021, Cà Foscari University of Venice, Italy

www.transforming-care.net

Time is a key dimension that structures the social organization of care, care relations and interactions, and care experiences. Time is also inherent to the institutionalization and change of care regimes. As such, the analysis of care policies and practices cannot do without the incorporation of a temporal perspective. Care may take different meanings and forms in “normal” and “disruptive” times as in the case of critical events, such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

Following previous editions (2017 and 2019), the Transforming Care Conference series is to be held every two years. Focus is on early child education and care, care for adults with

disabilities and long-term care for older people in the same broad perspective, as components of a more general policy field. The Conference Series is now supported by the creation of a Transforming Care Network (<http://www.transforming-care.net>) through which scholars can continuously interact and exchange information and research results.

The Transforming Care Conference 2021 will investigate in a global setting:

- How policies consider and shape time for care?
- How care professionals, caregivers and care receivers perceive time in care relationships?

- How the regulation of time influences formal and informal care work?
- How time for care is being negotiated within care arrangements?
- How care practices and policies change across historical time?
- How is care affected in times of emergency and profound crisis?

We now invite scholars to submit abstract to the conference. The Call for Paper is open **from November 15 until Jan 31, 2021.**

Five main dimensions of transforming care are addressed in the conference:

- Changes in the institutional setting of care systems and in care policy
- The impact and dilemmas of social and policy innovation in care services
- Changes in care arrangements and informal care practices
- Transformations affecting formal and informal care work
- The impact of COVID-19 on care practices and policies.

Confirmed keynote speakers:

Prof. Margarita Estevez-Ave (Syracuse University, US) and Prof. Peter Moss (University College London, England)

Important dates

Nov 15th-Jan 31: Call for Papers

Feb 28th: Notification about accepted papers

Mar 1st - June 1st: Registration

Organized by Prof. Barbara Da Roit, Ca' Foscari University, Venice, Italy

Prof. Costanzo Ranci, Social Policy Lab, Polytechnic University of Milan, Italy

Prof. Tine Rostgaard, Department of Social Work, Stockholm University, Sweden, and Department of Social Sciences and Business, Roskilde University, Denmark

The conference will be conducted online due to the current and expected pandemic situation.



Network

We are an association of researchers who are interested in ageing. We aim to facilitate contacts and collaboration among these researchers, and to provide them with up-to-date information. To reach these goals, we organize conferences and workshops, produce a newsletter, and maintain an email list. Because we are part of the European Sociological Association (ESA), many of our members work in sociology. However, we also have members who work in, for example, social policy or psychology.

Visit our homepage, where you can find information on all of our activities. If you have any questions or you want to contribute to the Newsletter, do not hesitate to **CONTACT US!**

www.ageing-in-europe.net

Email: ageingineurope@gmail.com





Dr Edward Tolhurst

Ed is a Lecturer in Health Research at Staffordshire University, UK. He is a qualitative researcher in the field of ageing, dementia and care. Ed's first involvement with the Network was as a participant at a PhD workshop in Porto in July 2012. He then joined the Board in early 2014. Ed convened the Network's 5th PhD workshop at the University of Chester, UK. He is also co-editor of our newsletter. Ed is the Coordinator of the Network for the period 2019 to 2021.



Dr Lucie Galčanová Batista

Lucie works as a Researcher at the Office for Population Studies at Masaryk University in Brno, Czech Republic. In her research and teaching, she focuses on cultural, and environmental gerontology, and on intersections of spatial, cultural and environmental sociology. She joined the Research Network and the Board in 2015 at the ESA conference in Prague. She served as organising secretary of the 4th Midterm Conference of the Network that took place in 2018 in Brno, CZ. Lucie is the Co-Coordinator of the Network for the period from 2019 to 2021.



Dr Oana Ciobanu

Oana is assistant professor in the Institute of Demography and Socioeconomics and leader of the research group 'Diversities in Ageing Societies' at the Centre for the Interdisciplinary Study of Gerontology and Vulnerability, at the University of Geneva, Switzerland. She focuses mainly on the population of older migrants. Using qualitative and mixed-methods, Oana studies aspects like transnational migration, social networks, access and use of welfare services and vulnerability. Oana has become a member of the Research Network and of the Board in 2019. Since then she is co-editor of the newsletter.



Dr Outi Jolanki

Outi works at the Tampere University, Faculty of Social Sciences and at the University of Jyväskylä, Department of Social Sciences and Philosophy, Finland. She is one of the leaders of the multidisciplinary Centre of Excellence in Research on Ageing and Care (CoE AgeCare) which has research groups from the University of Jyväskylä, Tampere University and University of Helsinki. Her research and teaching focus mainly on qualitative research, and on the linkages between social wellbeing, housing and living environment, new models of senior housing, informal care, and care and housing policies. She joined the Board 2019.



Dr Amílcar Moreira

Amílcar is a Portuguese researcher at the Institute of Social Sciences, University of Lisbon, where he is the Principal Investigator of the DYNAPOR - a dynamic microsimulation model of the Portuguese pension system. His research interests include: ageing, pensions, income distribution and comparative social policy. Currently, he is part of MIGAPE (Mind the Gap in Pensions), a research consortium looking at the mechanisms that explain the Gender Pension Gap in Europe. Previously he has been involved in a number of ageing-related cross-national collaborations such as MOPACT (Mobilising the Potential of Active Ageing in Europe), or the European Science Foundation's 'Forward Look' on Ageing, Health and Pensions.



Dr Jenni Spännäri

Jenni is a Finnish researcher in sociology of religion and social gerontology, at the University of Helsinki and the University of Eastern Finland. Her research interests include: religion, spirituality and values, wisdom and compassion, innovativity and working life, retirement migration and life course perspectives. Recent projects include the international project Transmission of religion across generations -project funded by the John Templeton foundation, and the CoPassion (The Revolutionary power of compassion) -project funded by the Finnish funding agency for Technology and Innovation. Jenni is a part of the local organizing committee of the forthcoming RN01 Midterm conference. She joined the board in 2011.



Dr Justyna Stypińska

Justyna works at the Free University of Berlin, Institute of East European Studies, Department of Sociology, Germany. She received her PhD from the Jagiellonian University in Krakow for a dissertation on age discrimination in the labour market. She is a leader of an international project MOMENT- Making of Mature Entrepreneurship in Germany and Poland. Her research focus on ageing on the labour markets, age and gender inequalities in the life course perspective, as well as the relation between ageing, social innovation and social sustainability. She joined the Board in 2015.



Dr Konrad Turek

Konrad works at the Netherlands Interdisciplinary Demographic Institute (NIDI-KNAW). His research is focused on changing and ageing labour markets, development of inequalities across the life courses, work at older ages and retirement process. He has also published on topics related to ageing policies, ageism and age stereotypes, the role of employers, age management and lifelong learning. He joined the Board in 2019, and since then he is a co-editor of our newsletter.



Dr Anna Urbaniak

Anna is a social sciences researcher with expertise in spatial aspects of ageing, age-friendly cities and communities, life-course transitions, the re/production of social inequalities across the life course. She works as a researcher at the University of Vienna, Austria. Her current work explores the gendered nature of the pathway from early life socio-economic conditions, micro-, meso- and macro-influences to exclusion from social relations in later life, and the consequences for health and wellbeing in later life. She joined the Research Network and the Board in 2016 and since 2019 she is PhD student liaison.