

Marta Gregorčič, Kaja Cizelj

MEN'S GENDER CAPITAL EXPERIENCES IN LATER LIFE

ABSTRACT

Over the last decade there have been substantial advances in understanding the gendered dimensions of ageing. Prior studies have mostly dealt with understanding the lives of older women while largely neglecting or omitting older men. The focus on women facing disadvantages in socio-economic and marital status has shifted to men's post-work and health issues in the last few decades, and only recently to masculinities and gender capital in later life. Contemporary discussions on cultural and gender capital bring relevant recognition and somehow unintentionally reveal that gender can matter to the same extent or even more in old age than in childhood or adulthood. This article analyses the results of semi-structured in-depth interviews with 98 men aged 60 or more and other data collected in Slovenia as part of the Old Guys Erasmus+ project. The project results are in line with recent studies on gender capital and masculinities, and justify why older men should be seen, discussed and examined as individual agents who practice, perform and produce gender in later life too. They also explain why hegemonic masculinity is only one aspect of gendered life experiences and that different masculine realities stand alongside each other and are as necessary for men in later life as femininities are for women, particularly in contemporary societies where both aged men and women are seen and represented as de-gendered, un-gendered or even genderless.

Key words: *gender capital, masculinities, ageing, de-gendered aged people, later life*

IZKUŠNJE MOŠKIH Z DRUŽBENOSPOLNIM KAPITALOM V POZNEM ŽIVLJENJSKEM OBDOBJU – POVZETEK

V zadnjem desetletju smo pričra precejšnjemu napredku pri razumevanju o spolnih razsežnosti staranja. Predhodne raziskave so se večinoma osredotočale na življenje starejših žensk, starejše moške pa so zanemarile ali izpustile. Od proučevanja socialno-ekonomskega prikrajšanja starejših žensk in vdovstva so se šele v zadnjih desetletjih usmerile tudi na zdravstveni in poupokojitveni položaj starejših moških, prav pred kratkim pa so začele osvetljevati tudi moškosti in družbenospolni kapital v poznem življenjskem obdobju. Aktualne razprave o kulturnem in družbenospolnem kapitalu prinašajo pomembna spoznanja, hkrati pa nenamerno razkrivajo, da je družbeni spol v starosti enako pomemben, kot je v otroštvu ali odraslosti, če ne še bolj. V članku analiziramo rezultate polstrukturiranih poglobljenih

Marta Gregorčič, PhD, Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana, marta.gregorcic@ff.uni-lj.si

Kaja Cizelj, Student, Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana, kaja.cizelj@gmail.com

intervjujev z 98 moškimi, starimi 60 let ali več, in druge podatke, zbrane v Sloveniji v okviru projekta Erasmus+ Old Guys. Rezultati projekta odsevajo ugotovitve nekaterih študij o družbenospolnem kapitalu in moškostih ter utemeljujejo, zakaj je treba (ne)dejavnost starejših moških proučevati prek samih akterjev, ki v poznem življenjskem obdobju še vedno izkazujejo, izvajajo in proizvajajo družbeni spol. Prav tako pojasnjujemo, zakaj je hegemonika moškost le eden od vidikov ospoljenih življenjskih izkušenj ter da različne moške stvarnosti stojijo druge ob drugi in so v poznem življenjskem obdobju za moške pomembne v enaki meri kot različne ženskosti za ženske. To je v sodobnih družbah, v katerih so tako starejši moški kot starejše ženske dojeti in prikazani kot razspoljeni, odspolnjeni ali celo brezspolni, še toliko bolj pomembno.

Ključne besede: *družbenospolni kapital, moškosti, staranje, razspoljeni starejši ljudje, pozno življenjsko obdobje*

INTRODUCTION

Over the last decade there have been substantial advances in understanding the gendered¹ dimensions of ageing. Feminist studies in particular have deepened issues such as gender roles, identities, relationships, and social capital in later life. As already acknowledged by many scholars, prior studies mostly dealt with understanding the lives of older women while older men have been largely neglected or omitted (Vandervoort, 2000; Arber, Davidson & Ginn, 2003; Mackenzie et al., 2017; Foley, 2018). Although the focus on women facing disadvantages in socio-economic and marital status (women's disadvantages from age and gender inequality as well as widowhood) has shifted to men's post-work and health issues (the loss of the role of men after retirement, and mortality), the subject of men and (hegemonic) masculinities in later life has only recently gained more attention (Connell, 1995; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Arber et al., 2003), particularly with current studies on cultural and gender capital (Bridges, 2009; Huppatz & Goodwin, 2013; Huppatz, 2012; Thompson & Langendoerfer, 2016; Thompson, 2018) and men's community-based activities in later life (Carragher & Golding, 2015; Golding, 2015; Mackenzie et al., 2017; Golding & Foley, 2017). Recent works on the gendered dimensions of ageing have unintentionally revealed that gender matters a lot in later life, probably more than was assumed in prior studies. Thus, the first section of this article briefly summarises recent relevant findings on the gendered dimensions of ageing.

The second section is dedicated to gender capital and masculinity capital – issues that become promising although they are rarely discussed in the context of later life. We tried to justify why older men should be seen, discussed and examined as individual agents who practice, perform and produce gender. We also considered why hegemonic masculinity is only one aspect of gendered life experiences and that different masculine realities stand alongside each other and are as necessary for men in later life as femininities are

¹ When the term gendered is used, it means “ideas about gender: assumptions and beliefs on an individual level as well as societal level, and how they affect thoughts, feelings, behaviours and treatment of women and men” (Arber, Davidson, & Ginn, 2003, p. 4).

for women, particularly because both older men and women are seen and represented as de-gendered, un-gendered, genderless (Thompson, 2018). All these theoretical views and definitions further help us interpret the results of the Slovenian part of the *Old Guys Say Yes to Community*² study presented in the third section. A sample of the extensive qualitative study carried out as part of the project, and a content analysis, which was focused solely on the experiences of men with gender capital in later life, is discussed there. Besides presenting the main results of the study on gender capital, we begin by reconstructing two stereotypes that were most frequent in public discussions that we organised as part of the project. The discussion also casts light on other relevant results from the Slovenian study sample, and in particular the insights into how men aged 60 years or more create and produce masculinities and masculinity capital in later life. Besides this, older men's narratives are discussed and examined through individual agents who also practice, perform and produce gender in later life. The final chapter draws attention to some of the shortcomings of the study as well as to the further needs and possibilities of exploring the topics discussed.

WHY DOES GENDER MATTER IN LATER LIFE?

As already indicated, recent work on the gendered dimensions of ageing has unintentionally revealed that gender can matter even more in old age than in childhood or adulthood (this is mostly due to the sociological rather than the psychological or the physiological aspects of later life, as argued further on in this section). To support this bold assumption, a brief summary of relevant prior findings is necessary.

First, the inequalities that persist between women and men over the whole course of their lives (for example, education level, occupational segregation, income, etc.) become intensified in old age, resulting in 'cumulative disadvantage' (Cruikshank, 2003). In Slovenia the mirror reflection of cumulative disadvantage can be seen in statistical data: while the suicide rate is highest among (older) men and widowers, two thirds of retired people at risk of poverty are women (55,000 or 20.9%, compared to men, 10.4%) (SURs, 2018). Intensified inequalities in later life have mostly been discussed with the accumulation of effects across the life course, but not on the basis of gender capital experiences that might be relevant for aged people and that can change (dramatically) in later life. As already proved by Arber et al. (2003) socio-economic circumstances and the life course of older people continue to connect with and impact on identities, social relations and social well-being in later life but in different ways according to gender. Second, gender roles might change in older age (to remain independent, widowers who had never done household work before learn how to take care of themselves, or men learn how to take

2 The project is part of Erasmus+ (Strategic Partnership for Adult Education, agreement number: 16-KA204-021604, case number: KA2-AE-9/16) and took place between October 2016 and August 2019. The leading organisation was the University of Ljubljana; the partner organisations were the Slovenian Association of Adult Educators, the University of Algarve, the University of Wrocław, Tallinn University and the Association of Estonian Adult Educators – ANDRAS.

care of their spouse in later life, etc., and *vice versa*, older women start to do things they had never done or been able to do because of family obligations or other reasons; among other things, they start to study).

Third, older adults perceived as a de-gendered group (Thompson, 2007; Gleibs et al., 2011) are confronted with new and (un)known situations, roles, assigned identities and attitudes towards them in later life, which are different for women than for men. De-gendering theory proposed that gender becomes a less central aspect of the self as people grow older. Although rejected by many scholars and critical studies, it prevails in contemporary hegemonic discourse on ageism. People become quite comfortable living in their gender costumes, therefore taking them off in old age is not easy (Ryle, 2018). The period of partnering, parenting, and making a living places specific demands on people's performances of gender. "Widowhood and old age might be perceived as a chance to escape those demands, but a closer examination reveals an important dimension of the way those demands are experienced by real people in their everyday lives" (Ryle, 2018, p. 161). Davidson (2001) has shown that for older women, widowhood may lead to a new-found sense of freedom and autonomy, whereas widowers can see no advantages at all to being a widower compared to being married. In his most recent book, Thompson (2018) argues that older men are neither 'de-gendered' nor 'ungendered' nor 'genderless', as often perceived in the discourse of ageism: "To all intents and purposes, growing old seems to be outside conceptualisation of masculinity. In most discourses one can be masculine and one can be old, but not both" (Thompson, 2018, p. 4). Men have trouble dealing with older age because they have followed a masculinity script that left little room for them to negotiate unavoidable problems (Thompson and Langendoerfer, 2016) or because they were left with the 'incomplete masculine script' that concludes somewhere before old age (Spector-Mersel, 2006).

Furthermore, treated as a homogenous group defined solely by age and ageism, older adults face stereotypical and discriminatory attitudes on a daily basis and differently regarding their gendered identity. As discussed by Arber et al. (2003, p. 3), the current generation of older women have had a very different life course from older men. In terms of cohort changes, the lives of women have changed enormously over the last century and the present circumstances of older people can only be understood by reference to their prior life course. Similarly, Thompson (2018) argues "in a manner parallel to the absence of a life span time perspective in masculinity scholarship and thus men's studies emphasis on never-ageing masculinities, the field of social gerontology long employed a lens in which ageing adults were portrayed as gradually moving along a life course unaffected by gender relations, practices and preferences." (p. 5) He also argues for using terms such as 'ageing men/aged men' and 'old/very old' instead of 'older', which "homogenises the vast differences among mature men and blurs the distinctive life experience of middle-aged and older men. It segregates all of these older men as a single group, distinguished from the category 'younger'" (Thompson, 2018, p. 9).

Besides, contradictions with (and within) hegemonic masculinities and traditional femininities may arise and may heighten the advantages or disadvantages of gender capital

(due to the decline of physical health, cognitive capital, etc.). For example, the fact is that older women are more likely than men to spend their final years being cared for by agencies (institutions) outside the family, while widowhood has become normative in western societies (Arber et al., 2003). Another example is 'the othering of ageing' by using non-gendered nouns such as 'seniors' or 'elders' instead of 'old men' (Thompson, 2018). Besides this, older women are facing heavy pressure to 'stay' young and 'look' young, which is less pronounced for men as they age (Featherstone & Hepworth, 2000; Arber et al., 2003), the so-called double standard coined by Sontag (1978). Gender issues also become more and more relevant before retirement since the demand for stereotypical feminine skills (social interaction and embodied performance) is rising as the labour market is changing; this may mean "that working-class femininity is becoming more desirable and sought-after than working-class masculinity" (Huppertz & Goodwin, 2013, p. 296). Furthermore, current discourse on ageing tends to universalise the past and present experiences of men and women so that all differences (including class) disappear.

Last but not least, social support literature has consistently shown that both singlehood and widowhood have different consequences across gender lines (Vandervoort, 2000), among other reasons because men and women are more likely to rely on women as their primary source of emotional support during their whole life and even more in later life (Antoucci & Akiyama, 1987; Belle, 1987; Kessler, McLeod, & Wethington, 1985; Vandervoort, 2000). This finding is in line with the recognition that women are more likely to get involved in caregiving activities, are more responsive to the life events of others, and are engaged in more emotionally intimate, dyadic relationships; men, on the other hand, tend to be more oriented toward socialising or group-oriented social activities compared to women (Vandervoort, 2000). Numerous studies have underlined that women are the ones who bring 'significant emotional events' (Freud, 1964) to people's lives in old age, which are necessary for self-realisation and self-actualisation, and for people to be deeply understood, accepted and valued for what they are at any given point in their life course. This point came very much to light throughout our *Old Guys* research, as presented later in this article under the subtitle 'Priceless wife/partner'.

GENDER CAPITAL AND (HEGEMONIC) MASCULINITIES IN LATER LIFE

Connell's concept of hegemonic masculinity has undergone fundamental transformations during the last few decades and Connell herself played a central role in the reformulation of the concept (Connell, 1995; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Hegemonic masculinities have been broadly used as a specific type of masculinity that subordinated other masculinities and femininities to provide men with guidelines and models of masculine conduct so that they could behave properly. The concept turned out to be applicable to all contexts of organising and understanding gender hierarchy. But hegemonic masculinity limited the male figure to a very specific type of male codes and images (western, white, middle-aged, middle class, heterosexual, etc.), and excluded all other existing patterns of masculinity, not only non-hegemonic masculinities but femininities as well.

Drawing mostly on Huppatz and Goodwin's (2013) article on men's gender capital experiences in working life and other feminists' appropriation of Bourdieu's concept of capital, this section tries to define how male and masculine embodiments can operate as a form of capital which might be accumulated and transacted. Our approach to gender and ageing tries to see beyond solely categorising and comparing male and female, focusing on how and where masculinity and femininity are culturally learnt, produced and reproduced, to avoid the generalisation or universalisation of the differences between masculine and feminine positions, dispositions, practices, and experiences, including class, in the lives of men and women. 'Gender capital' makes gender central in the social space. „Prior structural analyses have certainly provided invaluable insights into the social inequalities of gender relations and their reproduction. Still missing is the theorising and investigation of men's lived experiences with bodily ageing and getting older in economically developed typically ageist societies” (Thompson, 2018, p. 6). We assume that although it is a concept or construct, 'gender capital' can contribute to making men's experiences in later life visible and present.

Johnson and Repta (2012) emphasised the need to understand gender as plural, relational, multidimensional, and deeply contextual. “Gender is indeed a social and linguistic construction, a nonstable meaning ascribed to the male and female, but instead of categorising and comparing males and females, it is important to focus on how and where masculinity and femininity as social constructions are produced and reproduced” (Huppatz & Goodwin, 2013, p. 293). Bourdieu defined four forms of capital (economic, social, cultural, and symbolic) while several feminist scholars argue that gender disposition may also act as capital, and suggest broadening Bourdieu's notion of capital to include gender as 'embodied cultural capital' (McCall, 1992; Skeggs, 2004; Bridges, 2009; Huppatz & Goodwin, 2013). For Bourdieu (1986, 1991, 2005), capital was a resource for class distinction that defines how opportunities are enabled or constrained for individuals in a given field. But embodied cultural capital also takes the form of long-lasting dispositions of the mind and body possessed through the processes of self-improvement or socialisation (Huppatz & Goodwin, 2013). Gendered norms and behaviours are not natural or genetic but taught and learnt. Each societal construct of masculinity varies over time and according to culture, age and position within society (Connell, 1995).

Huppatz and Goodwin (2013) conceptualise gender as cultural capital that exists as feminine, masculine, female and male. “Female capital and male capital relate to the gender advantage that is driven from being perceived to have a female or male body, whereas feminine capital and masculine capital relate to gender advantage that is driven from a disposition or skill set or from simply being hailed as feminine or masculine” (Huppatz & Goodwin, 2013, p. 295). Thus, masculine bodily appearance is only one dimension of masculine capital, a 'muscular masculinity' (ibid., p. 300). Drawing on culturally learned femininities and masculinities, gender capital is a capital that is available to men and women (Huppatz & Goodwin, 2013). It comprises the “knowledge, resources and aspects

of identity available—within a given context—that permit access to regime-specific gendered identities” (Bridges, 2009, p. 92). “Gender capital is also defined, employed and evaluated within a patriarchal gendered order that values a hierarchical relationship between masculinities and femininities, regardless of contextual distinctions” (ibid., p. 93). However, stereotypical or hegemonic gender dispositions may be the most rewarded dispositions and are more likely to be symbolically legitimated (Bridges, 2009; Coles, 2009; Huppatz & Goodwin, 2013).

To restate, male capital relates to the gender advantages that are derived from being perceived to have a male body, and this form of capital is distinct from the capital that flows from being perceived to be masculine (Huppatz & Goodwin, 2013, pp. 299–300). Masculine capital relates to the gender advantages that are derived from culturally and socially learned masculine roles, norms, attributes, behaviours, positions, dispositions, practices, experiences – that are produced and reproduced within a given society as masculinity (or better yet, masculinities, although mostly recognised only as hegemonic masculinity). Masculinity and femininity are relational concepts, which only have meaning in relation to each other (Connell, 1995); in this regard we cannot analyse masculinities without also acknowledging and recognising femininities. At the same time, masculinity and femininity are ‘asymmetrical’ (Skeggs, 1997) and are inherently historical (Connell, 1995). Their making and remaking is a political process affecting the balance of interests in society and the direction of social change (ibid.).

In contrast to some feminist scholars who claim that women not only accumulate capital, they also possess their own feminine forms of capital, our study situates itself within a gender relations framework which conceptualises masculinities as relatively enduring sets of normative male practices yet simultaneously as practices that are open to and currently undergoing normative shifts (Golding, 2015; Mackenzie et al., 2017). Doing gender differently can be advantageous in later life. Among older men, there are “several factors that can threaten the maintenance of a masculine identity, including poor health, decreased mobility, increased reliance on others, and seeking traditional health-care services and community-based services for help with loneliness and social isolation” (Reynolds et al., 2015), among other also hegemonic masculinities and traditional femininities.

Drawing on 98 sources of scientific data (articles, papers, studies, etc.), some of which were published sometime after 2000, Thompson and Langendoerfer (2016) assessed to what extent old men used the 1950s and 1960s ‘masculine blueprint’ as defined by Brannon (1976)³. They support the argument that “performances of masculinities remain important to older men” and that “older men appear to have embodied masculinities and acquired a gender habitus which resembles Brannon’s ‘blueprint of manhood’. Further, in

3 To sum up Brannon’s definition of the ‘masculine blueprint’ in four categories: (1) show no weakness and emotional vulnerability; (2) strive to be respected and admired; (3) stay strong, silent and calm; (4) never give up and live life on the edge.

the absence of distinctive cultural guidelines as to how to be an ageing man, the rules that older men followed were nuanced versions of the idealised masculinity script” (Thompson & Langendoerfer, 2016, p. 136). They also found out that “men typically present narrative identities in keeping with the hegemonic young man model of masculinity, and, most likely, their former selves” (ibid.); older men were also not pleased with the de-masculinised way they were treated within ageist encounters or their occupying of an ‘otherness’ status (ibid., p. 137).

We explored men’s ‘gender capital experiences’ within feminised/masculinised social and community spaces available for men in later life; and within a society where the hegemony of agrarian patriarchy was replaced with new practices of ‘the separate sphere’, ‘the cult of youth’, and the socialist ‘cult of solidarity’ and ‘manhood’ that idealised the strong, self-confident, working, independent common man, who provides housing, safety and everything else necessary for a decent life. The cohorts of men in our study are from generations (mostly born in the 1940s and 1950s) when gender identities and practices were scripted by clear heteronormative and ageist masculinity directives, which provided men with a ‘blueprint’ for their behaviour and emotions.

THE METHOD AND THE SAMPLE

This article is based on extensive qualitative research on the inclusion of older men aged 60 or more in local communities in Slovenia, which was carried out in the spring of 2017. The research includes three focus groups, 98 half-structured in-depth interviews, 10 case studies of good practices, and a review of existing academic literature and Slovenian and European policies on education and inclusion of older adults of local communities for better quality of life.

Of the 22 participants included in the three focus groups carried out in Ljubljana-Bežigrad (2) and Ajdovščina (1), 5 were representatives of municipality, city, and town institutions, 6 were representatives of public institutions, and 11 were representatives of non-governmental organisations or civil society. Of the 98 interviews chosen for analysis, 42 were conducted in the urban environment of the capital (Bežigrad)⁴, 41 in a half-urban municipality (mostly Ajdovščina)⁵ or nearby rural areas, and 15 with other active older adults, so-called sociocultural animators in various parts of Slovenia, mainly from rural environments or from smaller towns (6 in the Posavska region, 2 in the Gorenjska region, 2 in the Osrednjeslovenska region and 1 in the Jugovzhodna region), as well as 4 from

4 The district community of Ljubljana-Bežigrad is the wealthiest quarter of the capital of Slovenia according to GDP per capita, is part of the region with the highest monthly average income per capita (1,099 EUR in 2015), and has the lowest risk of poverty rate (11.8) (SURS, 2017).

5 The municipality of Ajdovščina lies in the Goriška region in the western part of Slovenia. It was hit by two economic crises in the last 30 years. Although the western part of Slovenia used to have higher quality of life compared to regions in the eastern part, Ajdovščina has lost this privilege as a result of the crises and is now in the national average. For a special analysis of older men’s participation in Ajdovščina, see Gregorčič (2017).

Ljubljana. The sociocultural animators were selected by the students of the Socio-Cultural Animation and Education for Community Development course at the Department of Educational Sciences.

The average age of the interviewees was 71. The most represented age groups were 60–69 (46%) and 70–79 (41%), while the least represented age group was 80 years or more (12%). Three retired persons younger than 60 were also included in the research. The youngest interviewee was 56 years old and the oldest 86. The majority of the interviewees had completed upper secondary education, that is, general, vocational, and technical upper-secondary education (ISCED level 4 and 5) (54%), followed by a completed first cycle of tertiary education, that is, higher vocational education and higher professional and academic education (ISCED level 6) (25%). 10% of the interviewees were less educated, with three interviewees who had not finished primary education, three who had completed primary education (ISCED level 2) and four who had completed lower secondary education (ISCED level 3). Similarly represented were interviewees who had completed the second and third cycle of tertiary education (graduate and postgraduate, ISCED level 7 and 8) (11%). 95% of the interviewees were retired, and 5% of the interviewees aged 60 years old or more were still employed. 3% of the retired interviewees were still registered as economically active as sole proprietors or carrying out another form of paid work. The majority of interviewees were married or in a relationship (79%), 15% were widowed and 5 interviewees were single or divorced.

The semi-structured interviews took an average of one hour and a half and were as a rule conducted by qualified interviewers at the interviewees' home, their NGO office or other place they had chosen as a 'safe space'. The interviews consisted of four sets of questions: (1) the interviewees' personal life histories; (2) their roles in the community and their understanding of the community; (3) an assessment and understanding of the lives of men aged 60+ in their communities, their knowledge and skills; (4) their engagement with and participation in formal and informal organisations as well as the advantages in knowledge, skills, attitudes and practices they had gained in that way. The interviewees were guaranteed anonymity; therefore, the research findings are presented in a way that does not reveal their identities.

The method of open coding and selective/focused coding (Glaser, 1992) was used in the first stage of analysis, to find preliminary thematic categories arising from the interviewees' statements and to develop conceptual categories that synthesise more data/codes (ibid.). For the purpose of this article, we focused only on the gendered dimensions of aged men: *when* and *why* gender was mentioned or used/expressed in the narratives, as well as in what way, in what contexts. Besides content analysis focused on gender/ed life histories, life situations and interpretations, we also conducted discursive analysis when applicable. Other relevant data from the research were also examined through the same lens. In this article we provide some examples from the interviews to illustrate men's gender capital experiences, particularly masculine capital.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

During our project, we were faced with two stereotypes. The first one was based on the assumption that older men do not deserve “special research attention” and the second one was “aimed against” the very active students in later life – older women. However, the study has shown that men stay at home for very different reasons (their pension is too low, stress upon retiring, lack of social contacts, erased past life histories, social spaces and masculinity spaces, etc.). They create or do things mostly within their family circle, neighbourhood or village, rather than in educational and other civil society institutions which had not been traditionally intended for men, or in the wider community and its organisations if they had not been involved in them before retiring or if they had not prepared for that themselves before their retirement (see Gregorčič, Jelenc Krašovec, Močilnikar, & Radovan, 2018). One of the most important reasons for their inactivity is also the absence of a clear masculinity blueprint in later life.

Men in later life do not deserve “research attention”

The first stereotype which we encountered in public discussions, focus groups, in consultations with stakeholders in the education of older adults etc., was reproduced by men and women alike, although more often by men than women, by experts and laypersons alike, and especially by the interviewees in our study since we posed numerous questions directly asking them about the “(in)activity of older men in the community”. They referred to gender inequality, namely citing “women as the ones” who have actually been marginalised or underprivileged their whole lives and saying that men thus do not need “special treatment”, particularly not in the context of “marginalisation”. Moreover, they did say that women, in addition to all the work they do for their partners, “take care” of them and often look after them in the latter part of their lives. A 66-year-old sociocultural animator from an urban environment provided a multifaceted view of the issue:

I think that women feel a stronger need to socialise, while men prefer their peace and quiet, and they stay at home. They do attend various events but not any activities. There are only women in the folkloric association, there are no men, except for two musicians. Even in the pensioners’ association, there are almost only women. Men are not involved in those different associations that we have. I think that men prefer their peace and quiet. We used to join associations in order to socialise, participate in performances, events and to meet girls. Today, young people who join them do not have these interests anymore. Back then the focus was on quality, while now it is more on quantity. It used to be spontaneous, meeting people from your own neighbourhood. I’ve known some of them for 50 years now. You can learn a lot in every association. For me, it was a ‘school for life’.

Similarly, the stories of some other active interviewees indicated that in the socialist period (in the 1960s and 70s), where and how a person was (socially) engaged used to

be more important than their level of education, profession or job. And yet, our study has shown that the vast majority of the interviewees actually generalised the social inactivity of older men as “male inactivity” in later life. In fact, they claimed that men do not deserve “research attention” simply because they are “lazy”, “keeping themselves company is enough” or even “too much”, that they are “loners by nature”, that they “age sooner than women”, that they “do not feel like doing anything else than lying on the couch all day”, “watching TV” or going to “the pub”. The premises from which they started are very important in terms of their view of old men and masculinities in later life, since it is precisely those views of masculinity/masculinities that define masculinity capital in later life. Likewise, the interviewees did not try to defend men’s active ageing by referring to various activities and behaviour that older men otherwise carry out and that they carried out themselves. In their stories, they even cited a wide range of tasks “around the house” and “for the home” (building houses or fixing up their children’s apartments, working in the workshop, babysitting grandchildren, helping neighbours), working on the farm (the vast majority of the interviewees worked in their garden, farm, vineyard, orchard, apiary, around their vineyard cottage, shed or boules court, etc.) or their hobbies and leisure activities (hiking, firefighting, tennis, football, folklore, etc.). Almost a third of the interviewees perceived a certain part of their apartment as ‘their space’ – most frequently the study or a special room that served as a library, computer room, studio or music room, and some also had a workshop or a wine cellar, etc. A great many of the interviewees found ‘their space’, peace and activity in hiking and mountaineering, which were their everyday activities. Some of them took up these recreational activities for health reasons, but most of them had been involved in ‘their’ recreational activity their whole lives, and walking in later life meant spending their free time in an active and healthy way.

Nevertheless, the study has shown that older men are active and busy but that after retiring many of them had their masculinity space contracted to a context within their family, relatives, neighbours and village, particularly in the rural environment. On the other hand, older men from urban neighbourhoods, who did not have a garden, a shed, a workshop or another ‘space of their own’, where they could meet friends, neighbours, etc., and who were not active in associations and NGOs, stayed at home. Furthermore, the interviewees made it very clear that their home had also changed – it was no longer a meeting place for various casual visits from friends or a gathering place, as people’s habits had changed. Especially in urban environments, older people have shut themselves off for greater safety (to protect against theft, burglary, dealers, insurance agents, etc.) using different security systems, thus also isolating themselves from their neighbours and friends, whereas in some places in the country they have to hire security guards or ask their relatives to look after their houses during funerals or major holidays. Although the interviewees always first referred to pubs when defining a masculine space, many of them explicitly stressed that they did not frequent “men’s pubs” in their towns any more even though they still existed in some places.

Denying older women's general activity and the construction of 'otherness'

Only a few interviewees from our study tried to argue in favour of the assumption that older men are also socially active. If they were asked to explain further or clarify, they justified it mainly ideologically, as being self-evident and not needing additional explanation. Secondly, they justified it with the argument of gendered and ethnic differences: by 'attacking' the activity of older women (or denying their activity) as well as by differentiating themselves from immigrants coming from the former Yugoslav republics. In doing so, in the same way as the wider society assigns them an 'otherness' status (Thompson and Langendoerfer, 2016), they also constructed otherness for older women and former migrant workers.

We have to underline once again that only a handful of interviewees argued in favour of an apparent masculine status of the active and the busy. And yet, their views are important and suggestive because they defended them by 'attacking' women's general engagement after retiring in pensioners', charitable, and other civil society and educational activities as well as social life in general. Their views have to be considered also in terms of cohort changes – the lives of women have changed enormously over the last century (Arber et al., 2003) – as well as through the social engagement of older women, which has changed considerably in Slovenia, including in the field of education, seeing as the Slovenian Third Age University, which has been operating for 30 years, is extremely active, widespread and widely attended in Slovenia. A 79-year-old retired primary school teacher from a half-urban environment constructed such a stereotype quite vividly when he answered a question which made no reference whatsoever to men's or women's activity in the following way:

A: And would you say that, because of that, you are sometimes lonely?

B: Lonely? No way. I'll put it this way. Women are stupid, especially those that are not educated, but all of them go to the Third Age University [laughs]. Either they were in need of studying or something, now they all want to hold a master's degree. I had an excellent teacher, who said to me back then, 'Now you're struggling but when you start working, you'll need something completely different.'

Their attempts to deny 'older women's active life' were also symptomatic, considering that interviewees 'defended' the apparent, although non-existent 'social activity of older men' in the first part of the interview, while in the second part they acknowledged and faced the fact that 'women are everywhere, while men are nowhere'. A 71-year-old retired locksmith from a half-urban environment answered the question, "Would you say that there are differences with respect to role and status between men and women of your generation in your community?" in this way:

By and large, there's a matriarchy now. Everywhere now, the woman is the man of the house.

The interviewees also justified older men's social inactivity through comparisons with immigrants from the former Yugoslav republics who have lived in Slovenia for 30 years or more. This is displayed in the statement of a 67-year-old retiree with secondary school education, who lived in an urban neighbourhood with the greatest share of immigrants from the former Yugoslav republics and advocated the position that this is not his (Slovenian, masculine) habit:

Those southerners of ours are much more active when it comes to socialising. You can see the difference there. They socialise a lot, they're in groups all the time. As regards Slovenians, they're more loners, at least that's what I think. They're alone more. They like going solo. I don't need anyone either, because then you have to take him into consideration too. Even if I go hiking, it's not the same if I go alone or with someone, because then I can't do what suits me best. A lot of those little Bosnians of ours have gardens, then they have some garages, and then they gather there, around those garages, and then they criticise what others have done. But they wouldn't do anything themselves.

However, an analysis of the interviews conducted with former immigrants, who were also included in our study, has shown that their social connectedness was not due to their ethnic or cultural differences, attributed to them by their Slovenian-born peers, but mainly because their former status (migrant, refugee) had marked them considerably and they had to endeavour to integrate appropriately into Slovenian society (local contexts) their whole lives, and to bring their wife and children with them, enabling them to have a decent life. As regards social capital, some of them were placed at a substantial disadvantage compared to other older men because their children had resettled in various European countries, while their relatives lived in Croatia or Bosnia, and because of their low pensions, poor health, etc. they were not able to visit them anymore. Additionally, after retiring they struggled to keep in touch with their former co-workers because they used to be employed in traditionally male professions and sectors (construction work, etc.), which were characterised by high labour turnover, frequent company bankruptcies and low salaries, or they were burdened with their past status (Yugoslav military officers, etc.).

Priceless wife/partner

Our research further outlined very traditional, hegemonic gender identities: the "pricelessness" and "importance" of a wife/partner for older men in later life; they ran the household, managed the finances, took care of their husbands, children and grandchildren, planned how to "survive" the month on low incomes, planned for ageing and the necessary age-related changes in the household, helped the wider family, and on top of that offered support, affinity, and information based on the women's more numerous contacts and wider social networks. The research found that the interviewees have a relatively high level of dependence on women as companions and a strong emotional, social and informational reliance on them, as they can be the "first caregivers" and often also the "first confidantes".

The interviewees generally replied to the questions about who they can rely on, who they trust, who provides them with emotional support if they need it or who would help them if they fell ill with “my wife”; “my kind-hearted wife”; “I can only trust my wife”; “The first one is my spouse, it’s no secret, that way it’s easier for her and for me”; “I can’t turn to anyone other than my wife”; or, as a 69-year-old married and very active retiree from a half-urban environment said, “My wife and I support each other in general. Yes, there’s no doubt that my wife would be the first one I’d ask for help.” Earlier in the interview, he pointed out that he had hidden the seriousness of his health condition from his wife, so the interviewer asked him whether he had confided in anyone else: “No, no [laughs]. A hero to the end!”

Some interviewees thought that it was “inappropriate” to go around and socialise with friends if you have a wife, children and grandchildren at home or that you should also take care of your wider family in later life, primarily because “his wife will take care of him when he falls ill” anyway. This assumption was clearly made by a 62-year-old widower whose wife had died in an accident. He came from a half-urban environment, had a vocational qualification and was still in an employment relationship. Among other things, his statement alludes to the fact that “the pub” is an acceptable, safe, neutral, uncreative space for older men and, as such, accepted or approved as a suitable space also by their partners, whereas creating somewhere else (in the social and public sphere) could fuel mistrust between two partners or even lead to a conflict.

A: Do you think that there are many older men in your community who are not engaged in the life of your community?

C: Well, certainly there are many of them, certainly there are. Those who still have their partners and family certainly have their lives, are spoiled by their wives and so on. If, for example, they’re in poor health or if they have anything else, the woman is the one who takes care of them and so the man automatically doesn’t consider going somewhere away from home to create. He may go to the pub and that’s it, but in principle such a person stays at home and creates at home. Like I say, you then actually view your life in that way, when you help your children, grandchildren, you teach them, show them some good work, all sorts of skills that you have. If you have a wife, then you don’t need to go out, because two spouses are that true connection, while men will be men... Then we already begin getting out of the family community. If I take myself as an individual, since I don’t have a wife anymore, I can then seek some company somewhere, I’m also thinking about seeking it. But if a husband and wife are still together, then I wouldn’t be thinking about it. Then I’d rather use that time with my partner and for some nice moments with her.

The loss of a wife/partner was the hardest change for elderly men who were subjected to it. They described this experience as “the world falls apart”. Their wife had been the planner of all daily activities as well as other plans, “what to do, how to live”. It was apparent

that their wives influenced the structuring of the men's activities (they planned holidays, vacations, celebrations, everyday living, etc.). The easiest way to overcome these situations was by working or being active in other ways, which confirms the importance of productivity for men in later life. Some also overcame them with a systematic search for a new woman in their lives, from the point of view of support and care provided to men by women during this life stage, as already found in Gott and Hinchcliff's (2003) study.

In cases where the wives were younger and actively employed, these men assumed many prevailing women's roles or obligations (taking care of the household, babysitting grandchildren, etc.), i.e. feminine capital, without any doubts of going 'against' masculinity. This indicates that some masculinities in later life have already shifted from hegemonic masculinities which used to define past periods of life or that they began redefining with age. The interviewees highly valued family and relied on the help of their children. Due to modern employment, work hours, labour market conditions, and lifestyles, most of the material assistance was still provided by the older generation (financial help, building a house, gardening, babysitting grandchildren, shopping), while the children helped them with information and advice (finding information on the internet, advice on illnesses and other problems). There were also rare cases where financial assistance was offered by children to their parents who had had poorly paid jobs in the past; this assistance was often in the form of home sharing, and the elderly in return took over various (often household) chores and babysat the grandchildren. Moreover, interviewees described accepting help, which from the point of view of hegemonic masculinity represents failure or a defeat of masculinity, with dignity, expressing appreciation and praise for their children.

Incomplete script for performing masculinity in later life

The preceding sections have already revealed some elements of hegemonic masculinity ("Us men don't give in!"; "A hero to the end!") but at the same time a reconstruction of masculinity into a negative or deviant direction ("lazy", "the pub", "lying around"). The interviewees were reluctant to refer to older men's activity or back it up with examples from their community, association, organisation or group even though half of all the interviewees were actually very active. We have discovered that they had some difficulty in finding positive examples or best practice examples of men's active engagement because they were inhibited by their view of masculinity, which was still perceived within the framework of hegemonic masculinity, but they were nevertheless already rejecting and redefining it, as is demonstrated in this section. First, let us review three statements that allude to hegemonic masculinity. A 64-year-old retired lawyer replied to the question about who provides him with emotional support if he needs it in this way:

Nobody. I've never thought about that. I solve most things by myself. When I'm faced with a problem, I don't allow any commiseration. I think of the most terrible, worst-case scenario and then I build my defence system. That's my way. Then it's never as terrible as it could be, but it might be. I prepare for the most terrible situation. That's what's stuck with me from my past life.

When asked whether retiring had implied any stress or whether he had possibly been afraid of retiring, a 69-year-old retiree from a half-urban environment replied:

No, not at all. Not in the least. For me, retiring was as normal, to put it in layman's terms, as going to the pub for a drink. Absolutely, there was no stress at all.

Moreover, the following significant statement shows the interviewees' strong connection to their fathers' lives, or rather the hegemonic masculinities from over half a century ago with which they had been socialised and had grown up. Even though the vast majority of the interviewees linked the happiest event of their lives to family life (the birth of a child, their wedding, grandchildren, etc.) or to a successful professional life, some of them described certain difficult moments in their lives which had marked them, as the happiest events of their lives. A 69-year-old retired interviewee with a vocational qualification said the following:

I lived in a very patriarchal family and at that time we greatly respected our parents. At our house, dad was the one who influenced us. If he was in a good mood, we were all in a good mood; if he was in a bad mood, we were all in a bad mood. And the whole family lived together like this. At that time, people weren't going on holidays much. We kept asking him to go for a whole year, but he kept saying no. But when summer came, he said, 'Let's go.' And we went all across Yugoslavia and so we bonded as a family, got to know each other, learned to give things up for each other. When dad was pleased, he lit a cigarette and then that was a celebration for the whole family.

Both the subordination to past hegemonic masculinities as well as the surrender to today's hegemonic masculinities were commonly present among almost all interviewees, but our discourse analysis and content analysis have indicated how the interviewees had already redefined masculinities in later life. Specifically, as established by Thompson (2006), "lived masculinities are negotiated performances that help maintain the gender scripts that are 'out there' in culture, institutions, and in relationships, and reveal relations of dominance and subordination" (p. 634). The interviewees from our research also acted according to what was expected of them – at home, in their families, as well as in their communities and the wider public. In doing so, they often found themselves in conflict with hegemonic masculinities because the only category remaining from Brannon's definition of the 'masculine blueprint' was number (3), to stay strong, silent and calm, which they could also hold on to in later life. Many interviewees were not able to follow the other three categories anymore. Category (1) states to show no weakness and emotional vulnerability; however, mainly due to widowhood, separation from their partners, loneliness, illness, the negative life experiences they had when being forced to retire or upon a company's bankruptcy, due to low pensions, etc., they exposed numerous vulnerabilities, sorrows, fears and anxieties in their stories, which had marked them throughout. Some interviewees thought that it was 'inappropriate' to go around and socialise with friends if

you have a wife, children and grandchildren at home or that you should also take care of your wider family in later life, primarily because 'his wife will take care of him when he falls ill' anyway. This assumption was clearly made by a 62-year-old widower whose wife had died in an accident. He came from a half-urban environment, had a vocational qualification and was still in an employment relationship. Among other things, his statement alludes to the fact that 'the pub' is an acceptable, safe, neutral, uncreative space for older men and, as such, accepted or approved as a suitable space also by their partners, whereas creating somewhere else (in the social and public sphere) could fuel mistrust between two partners or even lead to a conflict.

A: Do you think that there are many older men in your community who are not engaged in the life of your community?

D: Well, certainly there are many of them, certainly there are. Those who still have their partners and family certainly have their lives, are spoiled by their wives and so on. If, for example, they're in poor health or if they have anything else, the woman is the one who takes care of them and so the man automatically doesn't consider going somewhere away from home to create. He may go to the pub and that's it, but in principle such a person stays at home and creates at home. Like I say, you then actually view your life in that way, when you help your children, grandchildren, you teach them, show them some good work, all sorts of skills that you have. If you have a wife, then you don't need to go out, because two spouses are that true connection, while men will be men... Then we already begin getting out of the family community. If I take myself as an individual, since I don't have a wife anymore, I can then seek some company somewhere, I'm also thinking about seeking it. But if a husband and wife are still together, then I wouldn't be thinking about it. Then I'd rather use that time with my partner and for some nice moments with her.

The loss of a wife/partner was the hardest change for elderly men who were subjected to it. They described this experience as "the world falls apart". Their wife had been the planner of all daily activities as well as other plans, "what to do, how to live". It was apparent that their wives influenced the structuring of the men's activities (they planned holidays, vacations, celebrations, everyday living, etc.). "The easiest way to overcome these situations and because I'm in poor health she sometimes invites a couple of friends too". Many of them started attending various activities thanks to their partner's encouragement, motivation or even needs and wishes.

CONCLUSION: RE-DEFINING MASCULINITIES FOR LATER LIFE

As indicated in our research and previous studies, contemporary society offers older men an incomplete script for performing masculinity. "Western masculinity scripts are not designed for older people, and therefore are concluded somewhere before 'old age'"

(Spector-Mersel, 2006, p. 73). Older men thus lack an alternative to midlife masculine ideals, depriving them of guidelines for being accepted, needed and valued in society, and limiting their ability to fashion effective and culturally respectable identities. Discussion about masculinity has so far been largely focused on hegemonic masculinity, not on the gender capital experience throughout life, including in later life. In the end, studies have often overlooked cohort changes, class distinctions, urban/rural differences, etc.

Our research revealed that interviewees gave up (or even rejected) most of the aspects of hegemonic masculinity, even though it had dominated their childhood and working years. Some changed unhealthy lifestyles (starting with alcoholism) along with exclusively male leisure groups the way they used to be like in clubs, pubs and cafés. However, they were not against other male activities based on productivity, creativity or recreation. On the one hand, they highlighted craftwork and knowledge, and on the other, literary works, rescue campaigns, historical memory (associations preserving the values of the National Liberation Struggle⁶), cultural and sports events and celebrations, neighbours helping neighbours, and household work. In their interviews, they portrayed a different masculinity script which they lived in later life, suggesting a re-definition of the masculine capital in later life.

In this context, they emphasised the need for a different social creative space into which older men could fit, where culture and tradition had a central place. Most often, it was described as an “open space for spontaneous creativity, socializing and games” or as an “open and inclusive space for all generations and genders”. Interviewees from both urban and rural areas referred to such a space as a “common area”, a “cultural centre” in the sense of sports and cultural institutions like *Sokol* or *Partizan*⁷ and similar public cultural institutions, which used to be the centres of culture, sports, creativity, performances and celebrations in local communities and residential districts. Institutions that used to include and integrate all generations, all knowledge, all members of society, etc., hardly exist anymore in Slovenia, and at the same time, only a few villages and towns (such as the ones surrounding Ajdovščina) have community centres that combine their main purpose with culture and the inclusion of older people. The interviewees stated that communities have disintegrated because of the modern way of life and that for a sense of community (for societal purposes), one needs a community space. This space may combine educational as well as practical, cultural, sports, entertainment and professional activities; and last but not least, it must be open and meaningful to all generations, not just older men.

Although this study provided many insights into men’s gender capital experiences in later life and supports our bold assumption that gender matters a lot in later life, our capacity to

6 *Narodnoosvobodilni boj* was the name of the Slovenian liberation movement during the Second World War.

7 *Sokol*, founded in 1863, was the first sports association in Slovenia, while *Partizan* evolved out of *Sokol* in the time of socialist Yugoslavia. *Sokol* was modelled on the association in Prague bearing the same name, founded a year earlier. Both associations/institutions were often the central community space in town, providing sports and cultural activities and events for all generations as well as political meetings and other engagements of the community.

draw definitive conclusions on the basis of these findings is clearly limited. However, we gained many insights into how interviewees learnt gender in later life and how they re-defined it through their perceptions, aspirations, needs, understanding and life situations. We have also seen masculinities as relatively enduring sets of normative male practices yet simultaneously as practices that are open to and currently undergoing normative shifts (Golding, 2015; Mackenzie et al., 2017) and how doing gender differently can be advantageous in later life. We have also pointed out the contradictions between the masculinities performed by the interviewees in real life and hegemonic masculinities dominating the discourses and practices in modern societies. Last but not least, we have also shown the contradictions between existing or emerging masculinities in later life on the one hand, and de-gendered theory, which sees men only as the elderly and not as men, on the other. Aged men are both masculine and old, and future studies will have to tackle the challenge of how to understand gender as plural, relational, multidimensional, and deeply contextual (Johnson & Repta, 2012) also in later life.

Acknowledgement

The article's results were collected thanks to research project 2016-1-SI01-KA204-021604, *Old Guys Say Yes to Community*, funded by the Erasmus + programme and encompassing the contributions of the interviewees; members of the blended learning training; participants of the focus groups; students and many professionals in the field of education and learning of older adults in Slovenia.

REFERENCES

- Antonucci, T. C., & Akiyama, H. (1987). An examination of sex differences in social support in mid and late life. *Sex Roles, 17*, 737–749.
- Arber, S., Davidson, K., & Ginn, J. (Eds.) (2003). *Gender and ageing: Changing roles and relationships*. Maidenhead: Open University Press.
- Belle, D. (1987). Gender differences in the social moderators of stress. In R. C. Barnett, L. Biener & G. K. Baruch (Eds.), *Gender and stress* (pp. 257–277). New York: Free Press.
- Bourdieu, P. (1986). The forms of capital. In J. E. Richardson (Ed.), *Handbook of theory and research for the sociology of education* (pp. 2412–58). New York: Greenwood Press.
- Bourdieu, P. (1991). *Language and symbolic power*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Bourdieu, P. (2005). *The social structures of the economy*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Brannon, R. (1976). The male sex role: Our culture's blueprint of manhood, and what it's done for us lately. In D. David & R. Brannon (Eds.), *The forty-nine percent majority: The male sex role* (pp. 1–45). Reading: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company.
- Bridges, T. S. (2009). Gender capital and male bodybuilders. *Body & Society, 15*, 83–107.
- Carragher, L., & Golding, B. (2015). Older men as learners: Irish men's sheds as an intervention. *Adult Education Quarterly, 65*(2), 152–168.
- Coles, T. (2009). Negotiating the field of masculinity: The production and reproduction of multiple dominant masculinities. *Men and Masculinities, 12*(1), 30–44.
- Connell, R.W. (1995). *Masculinities*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.
- Connell, R. W., & Messerschmidt, J. W. (2005). Hegemonic masculinity: Rethinking the concept. *Gender & Society, 19*, 829–859.

- Courtenay, W. H. (2000). Construction of masculinity and their influence on men's well-being: A theory of gender and health. *Social Science and Medicine*, 50, 1385–1401.
- Cruikshank, M. (2003). *Learning to be old: Gender, culture and aging*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Davidson, K. (2001). Late life widowhood, selfishness and new partnership choices: A gendered perspective. *Ageing and Society*, 21(3), 279–317.
- Featherstone, M., & Hepworth, M. (2000). Images of ageing. In J. Bond, P. Coleman & S. Peace (Eds.), *Ageing in society: An Introduction to social gerontology* (pp. 304–332). London: Sage.
- Foley, A. (2018). Masculine gendered spaces. *Studies in Adult Education and Learning*, 24(3), 29–38.
- Freud, S. (1964). *An outline of psychoanalysis*. London: Hogarth.
- Gilleard, C., & Higgs, P. (2000). *Cultures of ageing: Self, citizen and the body*. Harlow: Pearson Education.
- Glaser, B. G. (1992). *Basics of grounded theory analysis: Emergence vs. forcing*. Mill Valley: The Sociology Press.
- Gleibs, I. H., Haslam, C., Jones, J. M., Haslam, S. A., McNeill, J., & Connolly, H. (2011). No country for old men? The role of a 'Gentlemen's Club' in promoting social engagement and psychological well-being in residential care. *Aging & Mental Health*, 15(4), 456–466.
- Golding, B. (Ed.) (2015). *The men's shed movement: The company of men*. Champaign: Common Ground Publishing LLC.
- Golding, B., & Foley, A. (2017). Men and boys: Sharing the skills across generations. *Journal of Inter-generational Relationships*, 15(1), 52–63.
- Gott, M., & Hinchliff, S. (2003). How important is sex in later life? The views of older people. *Social Science & Medicine*, 56(8), 1617–1628.
- Gregorčič, M. (2017). Participacija starejših odraslih v praksah skupnosti in v skupnosti prakse. *Andragoška spoznanja*, 23(3), 35–53.
- Gregorčič, M., Jelenc Krašovec, S., Močilnikar, Š., & Radovan, M. (2018). *Recommendation letters for local community authorities and community organisations in Slovenia*. Retrieved from <https://oldguys.si/recommendation-letters/>.
- Huppatz, K. (2012). *Gender capital at work: Intersections of femininity, masculinity, class and occupation*. Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Huppatz, K., & Goodwin, S. (2013). Masculinized jobs, feminized jobs and men's 'gender capital' experiences: Understanding occupational segregation in Australia. *Journal of Sociology*, 49, 291–308.
- Johnson, J. L., & Repta, R. (2012). Sex and gender: Beyond the binaries. In J. L. Oliffe & L. Greaves (Eds.), *Designing and conducting gender, sex and health research* (pp. 17–37). Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Kessler, R. C., McLeod, J. D., & Wethington, E. (1985). The costs of caring: A perspective on the relationship between sex and psychological distress. In I. G. Sarason & B. R. Sarason (Eds.), *Social support: Theory, research and applications* (pp. 491–506). Boston: Martinus Nijhoff.
- Mackenzie, C. S., Roger, K., Robertson, S., Oliffe, J. L., Nurmi, M. A., & Urquhart, J. (2017). Counter and complicit masculine discourse among Men's Shed members. *American Journal of Men's Health*, 11(4), 1224–1236.
- McCall, L. (1992). Does gender fit? Bourdieu, feminism, and the concepts of social order. *Theory and Society*, 21, 837–867.
- Reynolds, K. A., Mackenzie, C. S., Medved, M., & Roger, K. (2015). The experiences of older male adults throughout their environment in community programme for men. *Ageing & Society*, 35, 531–551.
- Ryle, R. (2018). *Questioning gender. A sociological exploration*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

- Skeggs, B. (1997). *Formations of class and gender: Becoming respectable*. London: Sage.
- Skeggs, B. (2004). Context and background: Pierre Bourdieu's analysis of class, gender and sexuality. In L. Adkins & B. Skeggs (Eds.), *Feminism after Bourdieu* (pp. 19–34). Oxford: Blackwell.
- Sontag, S. (1978) The double standard of ageing. In V. Carver & P. Liddiard (Eds), *An ageing population* (pp. 72–80). Milton Keynes: Open University Press.
- Spector-Mersel, G. (2006). Never-aging stories: Western hegemonic masculinity scripts. *Journal of Gender Studies* 15(1), 67–82.
- SURS (2017). *Regije v številkah. Statistični portret slovenskih regij*. Retrieved from 2017http://www.stat.si/StatWeb/File/DocSysFile/9374/regije_v_stevilkah_2017.pdf.
- SURS (2018). Retrieved from <http://www.stat.si/statweb>.
- Thompson, E. H. (2006). Images of old men's masculinity: Still a man? *Sex Roles*, 55(9/10), 633–648.
- Thompson, E. H. (2007). Older men as invisible men in contemporary society. In B. A. Arrighi (Ed.), *Understanding inequality: The intersection of race/ethnicity, class, and gender* (pp. 289–298). Oxford: Rowman and Littlefield.
- Thompson, E. H. (2018). *Men, masculinities, and aging: The gendered lives of older men*. Baltimore: Roman & Littlefield.
- Thompson, E. H., & Langendoerfer, K. B. (2015). Older men's blueprint for 'being a man'. *Men and Masculinities*, 19(2), 119–147.
- Vandervoort, D. (2000). Social isolation and gender. *Current Psychology*, 19(3), 229–236.
- West, C., & Zimmerman, D. H. (1987). Doing gender. *Gender and Society*, 1(2), 125–151.