

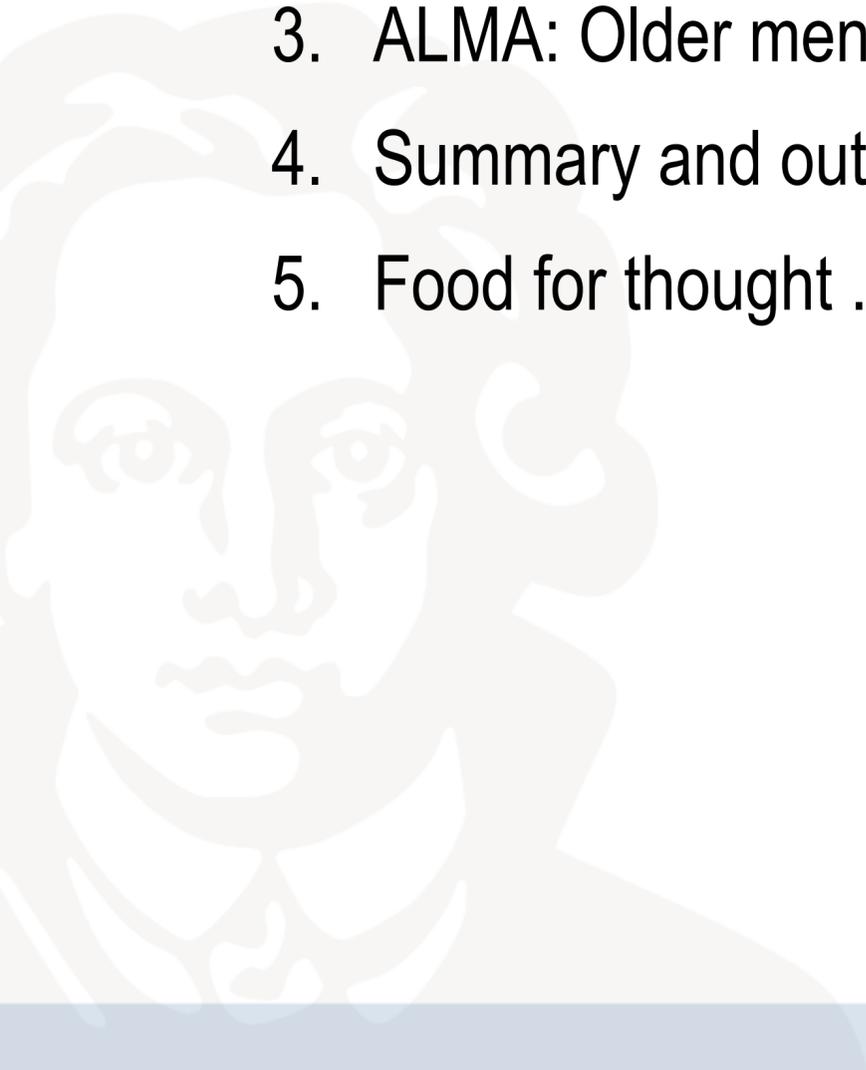
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Workshop 4: Men, Masculinities and Ageing

Ageing men as changing men? Caring Masculinities in Later Life

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1. Age and gender(relations)
2. Caring masculinities
3. ALMA: Older men living alone – pilot study in Frankfurt/Main
4. Summary and outlook
5. Food for thought ...



1. Age and gender(relations)

- Age and gender are both **social categories** that are continuously produced and reproduced with variations depending on time and place
- **Doing** gender (West & Zimmermann 1987), doing age (Schroeter 2007)
- To understand age and ageing it is necessary to consider **intersections** with other social categories (e.g. gender, ethnicity, race, (dis)ability) (Calasanti & Slevin 2001)
- **Power relations** among men and between men and women in relation to other social categories have been conceptualised as hegemonic masculinities (Connell & Messerschmidt 2005)
- In later life men experience **privileges** by gender but **marginalisation** due to age (Hearn 2010)
- The emergence of the the “third age” for post WWII cohorts (Laslett 1989) and radically changed later life (Gilleard & Higgs 2000) underscore the role of **agency** in the lives of older people.

2. Caring masculinities

Roots and development

- Roots in critical studies on men and masculinities and feminist care theory
- Absence of care in traditional constructions of masculinities (Hanlon 2012):
 - Care is defined as feminine
 - Doing care means enacting a feminized identity
 - Care is seen as something men are bad at
 - Care means relinquishing the power associated with traditional masculinity
- Elliott (2016) defines CM as “the rejection of domination and their integration of values of care such as positive emotion, interdependence, and relationality, into masculine identities” (p. 241) and in doing so recast traditional masculine values like protection and providing.
- Ungerson (2006) draws a distinction between ***caring for*** (practical task of care) and ***caring about*** (affective relations of care)
 - Scholz & Laufenberg (2019) call for CM as a concept to investigate the power relationships in the care work of men.

3. ALMA – Older men living alone

- **Aim:** To map the experiences of men living alone in later life as well as the services available to this group in an urban setting such as Frankfurt/Main.
- **Methods:**
 - Scoping review of social, educational and cultural services in Frankfurt/Main
 - Five qualitative stake holder interviews with service providers
 - **Four qualitative narrative interviews with older men living alone**
- **Question:** How does care work as a form of agency feature in the lives of older men living alone?

Leontowitsch, M., Fooker, I. & Oswald, F. (2019). The role of empowerment and agency in the lives of older men living alone. *European Journal for Research on the Education and Learning of Adults*, 10(3): 231-246.

3. ALMA – Older men living alone

The sample (maximum variation)

	Herr Rost	Herr Ün	Herr Färber	Herr Willershäuser
Age	76, born 1941	69, born 1947	86, born 1931	88, born 1930
Family status	Unmarried, LAT for 12 years	Divorced, instable LAT	Widowed, LAT for 10 years	Unmarried, single since 1980
Relatives	No children, one brother with family	2 children, 1 grandchild, extended family in TUR & D	4 children, 8 grandchildren, 2 great-grand children	No children, one sister, nephew and niece
Education	Degree-level	Left school at 18, teacher training	Apprenticeship	Apprenticeship
Financial situation	Good	Previous debt problems (gambling)	Precarious income, now good	Good
Social Network	Friends for different activities	Many acquaintances, feels lonely	Large circle of friends and acquaintances (church, political party)	Acquaintances

3. ALMA - Older men living alone

	Herr Rost	Herr Ün	Herr Färber	Herr Willershäuser
Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Post-operative care for this LAT partner between interview 1 and 2 (6 weeks) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cared for his mother who lived in his flat for 8 years Visits friend in care home 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cared for his terminally ill wife Looks after his LAT partner (dementia) Visits six friends in care-home every week 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visits and looks after friend in care home every weekend Runs errands for sister, cousin, neighbours, land-lady, local book shop
Meaning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Krankenschwester” (female nurse) Promise of reciprocal care Curiosity: caring and living together 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contradiction to traditional construction of masculinity Meaningful bond 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Downplays his caring work Sense of duty Daily structure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unrequited love Daily structure and continuity
Influence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Professional work and experiences with psychotherapy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Political work on gender equality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Christian ethics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gay identity Work in logistics

6. Summary and outlook

- Although they live alone the men were in meaningful **relationships** with others
- Caring for others involved push as well as **pull factors**
- **Caring for/about** others had multiple meanings for the interviewed men and helped them in the process of ageing (finding meaningful activities) and living alone (maintaining independence)
- Men's **biographies** (and the social and cultural contexts that shape them) are important in understanding their care work
- **Caring masculinities** allows an examination of how the men oscillate between their gendered privilege of seeing care as 'women's work' and care as agency in a life-stage of shrinking possibilities.

5. Food for thought

- **Equality:** Older men living alone and caring for others contribute to gender equality in small ways.
- **Awareness:** The care work of older men needs to be recognised but should not distract from the care work of women.
- **Life-long learning:** Older men should be supported in reflexive work that helps them recognise their life-long dependency on care work by others.

