

Aim

This study is aimed at expanding our knowledge on the financial situation of older married and widowed women in respect to their work and family history. For this purpose, we use information from all waves (from wave 1 to wave 7) of the Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe (SHARE), including the retrospective survey SHARELIFE (collected in waves 3 and wave 7).

Introduction

People's financial situation is closely related to poverty. This connection should not be ignored in the case of **older women, who are in general at a relatively high risk of poverty** (Zaidi, 2010). **Being a widow – in comparison to being married – increases this risk even more** (Biro, 2013; Corden, Hirst, & Nice, 2008; DiGiacomo, Davidson, Byles, & Nolan, 2013). There are several possible explanations for this relationship. Firstly, marriage often increases the financial well-being of older women; those who are married are generally better off than widows. Marriage increases access to financial resources both directly as well as indirectly (Biro, 2013; Corden et al., 2008). Secondly, worse financial situations in widowhood may be the consequence of the heavy expenditures that are incurred shortly before or after a husband's death (Corden et al., 2008; Fan & Zick, 2006). Finally, widows are on average older than married women. Since older age is generally related to worse health (Robine & Cambois, 2013; Salive, 2013), widowed women are exposed to higher health-related spending.

Work and family histories often provide an important explanation of the older woman's financial situation. The reason behind that is that individual pension benefits usually depend on the previously paid contributions, job tenure or wage level before retirement (*2015 Ageing Report: Economic and budgetary projections for the 28 EU Member States (2013-2060)*, 2015, p. 54). In the defined contribution pension systems the role of the labour market performance before retirement is particularly important for the level of pension benefits, which is confirmed by many studies which use microsimulations for comparisons of pension systems in different countries (Chłoń-Domińczak et al., 2018; Kotowska, Stachura, & Strzelecki, 2008; Zaidi, 2010).

Research Design & Significance

In this project, we use information from all waves of the Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe (SHARE), including the retrospective survey SHARELIFE (wave 3 and 7) for Germany, Poland and Czech Republic. Our analysis is based on the possibility that the data from both sources can be linked for respondents who participated in both SHARE and SHARELIFE. **The important added value of the research is the utilization of the new dataset of wave 7 of SHARE and SHARELIFE interviews which has been published just recently.**

This research is inspired by the work of Chłoń-Domińczak et al. (2018). However, our analysis will focus to much bigger extend on the older women – in particular, how do their work-family paths translate into their financial situation after age of 60. What’s more, we will investigate the potential protective role of the marriage in older age.

We will first identify widowed and married (and living with partner) women who participated in at least one of the regular waves of SHARE – 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, and 7 (“standard interview”), and had also completed SHARELIFE survey in either wave 3 or wave 7 (“SHARELIFE interview”). Table 1 below presents the basic statistics of the sample. Secondly, we will perform sequence analysis for these selected respondents using data from SHARE Job Episodes Panel – a generated dataset based on SHARELIFE collected in waves 3 and wave 7 (Brugiavini, Orso, Genie, Naci, & Pasini, 2019). The goal of this part is to distinguish main work-family paths that were undertaken by the respondents. Each woman from our sample will then have assigned one type of the identified work-family path. Thirdly, we will build regression models. The dependent variable will be subjective financial situation which will come from SHARE “standard interview”. The main independent variables will be marital status and work-family path. The model will control for the set of socio-demographic characteristic that will be extracted from “standard interviews” of SHARE.

The research will provide insight into financial situation of older women in relation not only to their work-family histories but also to current marital status. The study will add a valuable perspective into relation between widowhood and the financial hardship experienced by older women.

Table 1. Sample size of widowed and married women who had both SHARE and SHARELIFE interview

	Widows	Married
Germany	462	1890
Poland	744	2120
Czech Republic	891	1769

Source: own calculation based on SHARE data.

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This paper uses data from SHARE Waves 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 (DOIs: 10.6103/SHARE.w1.700, 10.6103/SHARE.w2.700, 10.6103/SHARE.w3.700, 10.6103/SHARE.w4.700, 10.6103/SHARE.w5.700, 10.6103/SHARE.w6.700, 10.6103/SHARE.w7.700), see Börsch-Supan et al. (2013) for methodological details. The SHARE data collection has been funded by the European Commission through FP5 (QLK6-CT-2001-00360), FP6 (SHARE-I3: RII-CT-2006-062193, COMPARE: CIT5-CT-2005-028857, SHARELIFE: CIT4-CT-2006-028812), FP7 (SHARE-PREP: GA N°211909, SHARE-LEAP: GA N°227822, SHARE M4: GA N°261982) and Horizon 2020 (SHARE-DEV3: GA N°676536, SERISS: GA N°654221) and by DG Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion. Additional funding from the German Ministry of Education and Research, the Max Planck Society for the Advancement of Science, the U.S. National Institute on Aging (U01_AG09740-13S2, P01_AG005842, P01_AG08291, P30_AG12815, R21_AG025169, Y1-AG-4553-01, IAG_BSR06-11, OGHA_04-064, HHSN271201300071C) and from various national funding sources is gratefully acknowledged (see www.share-project.org).

The paper uses also data from the generated Job Episodes Panel (DOI: 10.6103/SHARE.jep.700), see Brugiavini et al. (2019) for methodological details. The Job Episodes Panel release 7.0.0 is based on SHARE Waves 3 and 7 (DOIs: 10.6103/SHARE.w3.700, 10.6103/SHARE.w7.700).

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