

LoLA Internal Seminar

Widowhood risk, mean age, lifespan, and expectancy in Finland: three-decade trends and gender and educational inequalities

M. Moretti, K. Korhonen, A. van Raalte, T. Riffe, P. Martikainen

Widowhood is a disruptive event affecting a wide range of life domains, and in ageing societies, increased numbers of individuals are potentially exposed to it. Yet we lack a comprehensive understanding of the demography of widowhood. We draw on the entire population of individuals aged 65 and older who resided in Finland from 1987 to 2019 from the Statistics Finland population register. Using information on marital and cohabiting unions, discrete-time event history analysis and incidence-based multistate lifetables, we analyse lifetime risk, mean age at becoming widowed, widowhood expectancy, and variation in years spent widowed, and document gender and educational differences in these metrics over the last three decades in Finland. Additionally, we will show preliminary results of a demographic decomposition of widowhood expectancy, in order to understand the drivers of its change over time. Our results show that, over time, individuals are less likely to experience widowhood, and when they do, it occurs at older ages. Women have higher widowhood risk, expectancy, and a lower mean age at widowhood than men. Widowhood expectancy for women declined from 8 to 6 years, while for men, it stagnated at around 2 years. Low-educated women faced more widowhood years than highly educated, while the opposite holds for men. The results of the decomposition analysis will highlight the contributions to changes in widowhood expectancy given by improvements in survival, changes in partnership dynamics, and changes in the age and educational differences between partners. By showing decreased risks, delayed onset, and shorter widowhood expectancy, particularly among women, our results suggest that the current older population may experience reduced exposure to the psychosocial and financial challenges of widowhood, with potentially reduced caregiving burden on families and the state.

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01:00 to 02:30 pm (CET time)

Zoom link:

<https://uniroma1.zoom.us/j/87522718435?pwd=RmNON3RzOzJVXZWbzBKcnAzeTI0UT09>