

# **Family life trajectory features and personal wealth of women and men in older age**

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In light of an ageing population and associated public pension cuts, private wealth accumulation is increasingly important. Nevertheless, wealth inequality—particularly in older age—is rising. When examining potential drivers of wealth inequalities, research and policy have traditionally focused on the role of employment and social background. Although the family has additionally been recognised as a relevant driver of wealth inequality, previous research has not been able to capture and assess what aspects of family life courses are most relevant. This paper examines (I) *which* family life course trajectory features covering elements of the order, duration, and timing of events are most important for personal wealth in older age and (II) *how* these features are related to wealth, focusing also on (III) wealth stratification by gender. Using German data and an approach that combines machine learning feature selection algorithms and sequence analyses tools with regression techniques, we extend previous research that either (I) assessed few, but potentially irrelevant summary indicators using solely regression frameworks or (II) examined the relevance of entire life course clusters using sequence analyses and regressions without determining which single features matter within or across clusters. Using a data-mining feature selection algorithm, we identify 22 relevant features with duration-related variables deemed as the most important and timing-related variables most common among the selected features. Next, we will finalise the set of selected features regarding multicollinearity concerns and will use OLS regression to assess *how* these aspects predict women's and men's wealth in older age. For the regression, we will pay close attention to the potential gender differences in the magnitude and direction of associations. Our results will provide vital impulses for policy discussions on how to reduce or halt rising wealth inequalities and provide an environment that enables women and men to establish an economic safety net.