

**VIRTUAL PARTNER MEETING OF THE DANUBE-NETWORKERS
WITH A CONFERENCE
„SHARING BEYOND BORDERS: NEW WAYS OF CARE,
COMMUNICATION AND
COOPERATION OF OLDER PEOPLE ALONG THE DANUBE AND IN
EUROPE IN TIMES OF
COVID-19“**



**WELLBEING, LIFE SATISFACTION AND HAPPINESS AMONG
OLDER
PEOPLE IN THE COUNTRIES FROM THE DANUBE REGION**

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Older people in the time of COVID 19

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- In many countries exist highly problematic policy suggestions and comments revealing underlying ageist attitudes and promoting age discrimination.
- Such attitudes are based on negative stereotypes on the health and functioning of older adults. As a result, the lives of older people are devalued, including in possible triage situations and in the potential limitation of some measures against the spread of the pandemic to older adults.
- The negative stereotypes towards older adults are unjustified and unethical (Ehni, Wahl 2000)

How to overcome negative stereotypes in pandemic crisis?

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- Development of a more adequate response to the current pandemic in which the needs and dignity of older people are respected
- Focusing on the use of modern information and communication technologies among older adults
- Resisting the assumption of a paternalistic attitude towards older adults in the crisis
- Fostering regional networking, mutual understanding and solidarity between people living in Danube countries



Human Development Index (HDI)

Danube countries, 2019

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VERY HIGH HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

- 4. Germany
- 20. Austria
- 36. Slovakia
- 43. Hungary
- 52. Bulgaria
- 52. Romania

HIGH HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

- 63. Serbia

Questions

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- Are differences among Danube countries on the Human Development Index leading to differences in the subjective feeling of life satisfaction and happiness among older people ?
- Which factors for happiness perform differently in the Danube countries?
- How effectively can be increased the feeling of happiness among older people?

Respondents' life satisfaction by country in April 2020 fall below the levels observed in 2016

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- Austria 7.0
- Germany 6.8
- Romania 6.1
- Hungary , Slovakia 5.8
- Bulgaria 5.1

Respondents' optimism about their future by country (%) April 2020 fall below the levels before the pandemic too

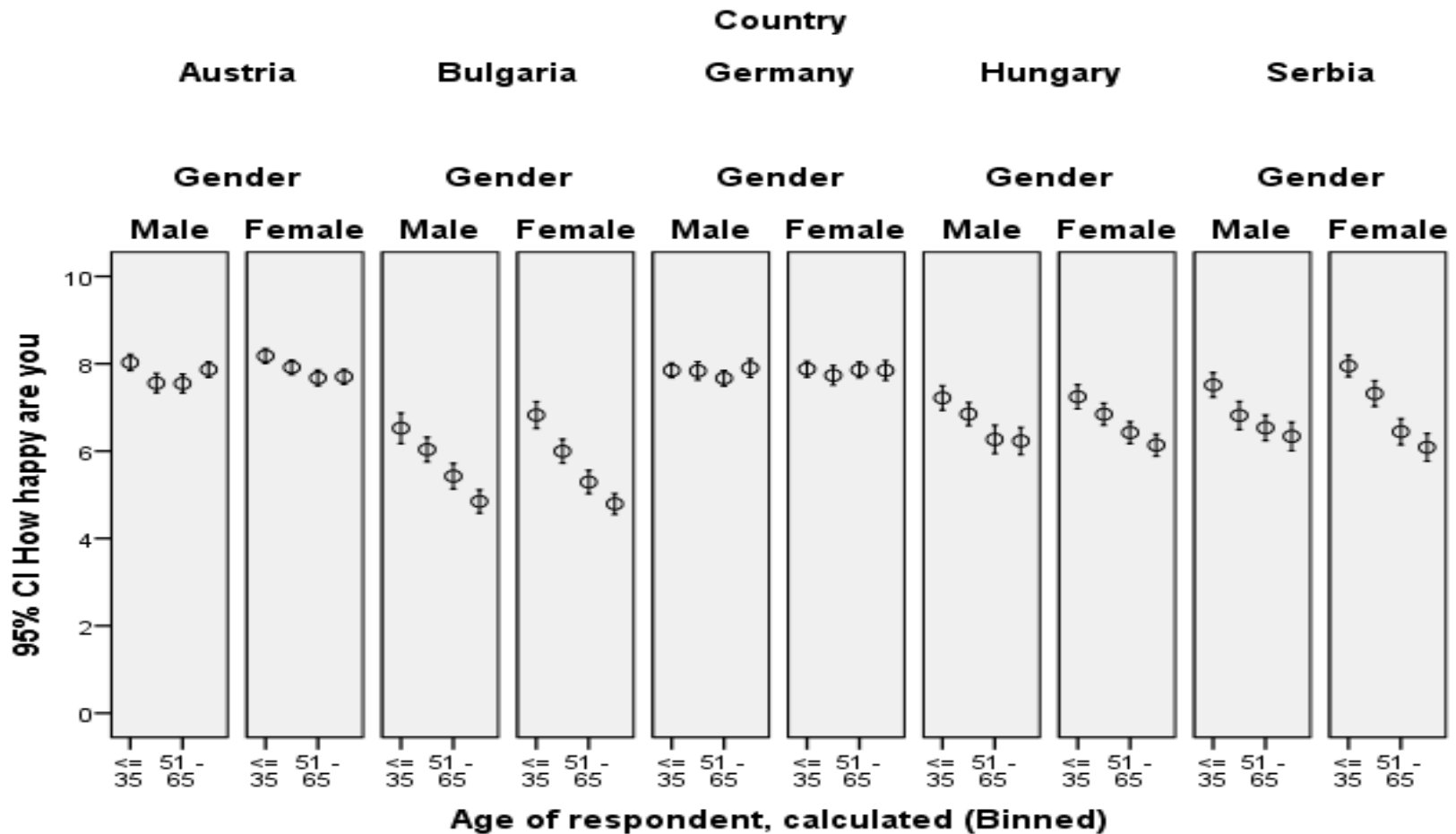
- Austria 58%
- Germany 52%
- Romania 50%
- Bulgaria, Slovakia 49%
- Hungary 43%

Age and happiness

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- In Austria and Germany older people are more satisfied with their life than older people in Bulgaria, Hungary and Serbia.
- Age differences in subjective happiness are less pronounced in Germany and Austria than in the other three countries.
- Older people are less satisfied with their life than younger people in Bulgaria, Hungary and Serbia

Older people feel less happy than younger people in Bulgaria, Hungary and Serbia, but not in Germany and Austria



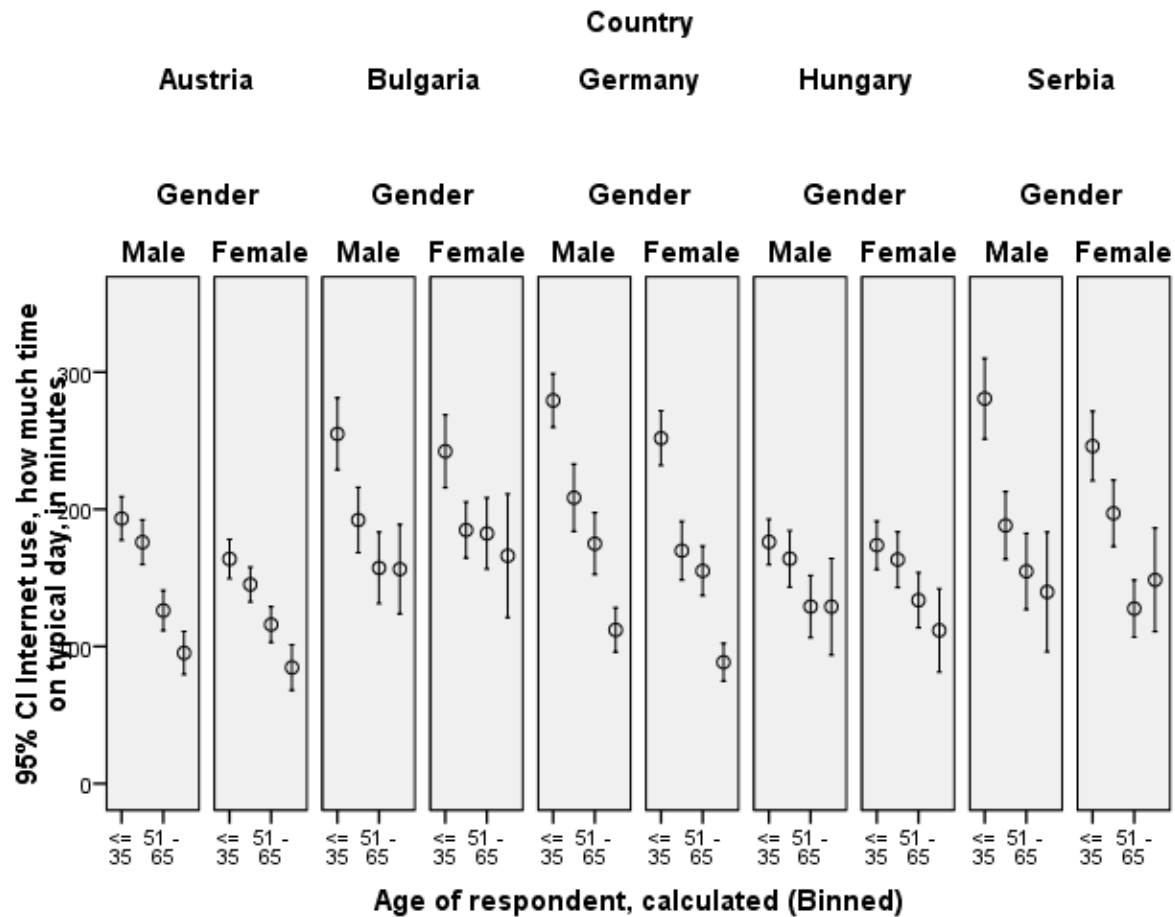
Internet increases happiness

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- The recommended social isolation during the COVID 19 crisis could be expected to impact very negatively alone living older people.
- Having internet connection is beneficial for overcoming isolation. Hence all efforts for connecting older people via internet are beneficial for them.
- Older people in Bulgaria and Serbia use more internet than the same age people in Austria and Germany.

Internet use per country, age groups and gender

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Missing Digital Abilities as a barrier

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- Retired persons (36%) are the most likely to spontaneously say **they don't feel the need to improve their digital skills** (vs. 19-27% of other socio-professional categories)

Main barriers to improving digital skills – country differences

- Bulgaria – main barrier- I don't feel the need to improve my digital skills
- Austria- I don't know what specific skills need to be improved, Lack of time
- Germany, Hungary, Slovakia, Romania - Lack of time
- Cost as a principle barrier are considered in Hungary and Romania

Purchasing as a purpose for using internet

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Country differences: answer “Yes”

- Austria 48%, Slovakia 47%
- Hungary 30%, Bulgaria 28%, Germany 26%
- Romania 18%

People 55+ purchase less on line compared to younger generations:

- 25-39 – 45% Yes, 54% No
- 40-58 - 38% Yes, 61% No
- 55+ - 24% Yes, 75% - No

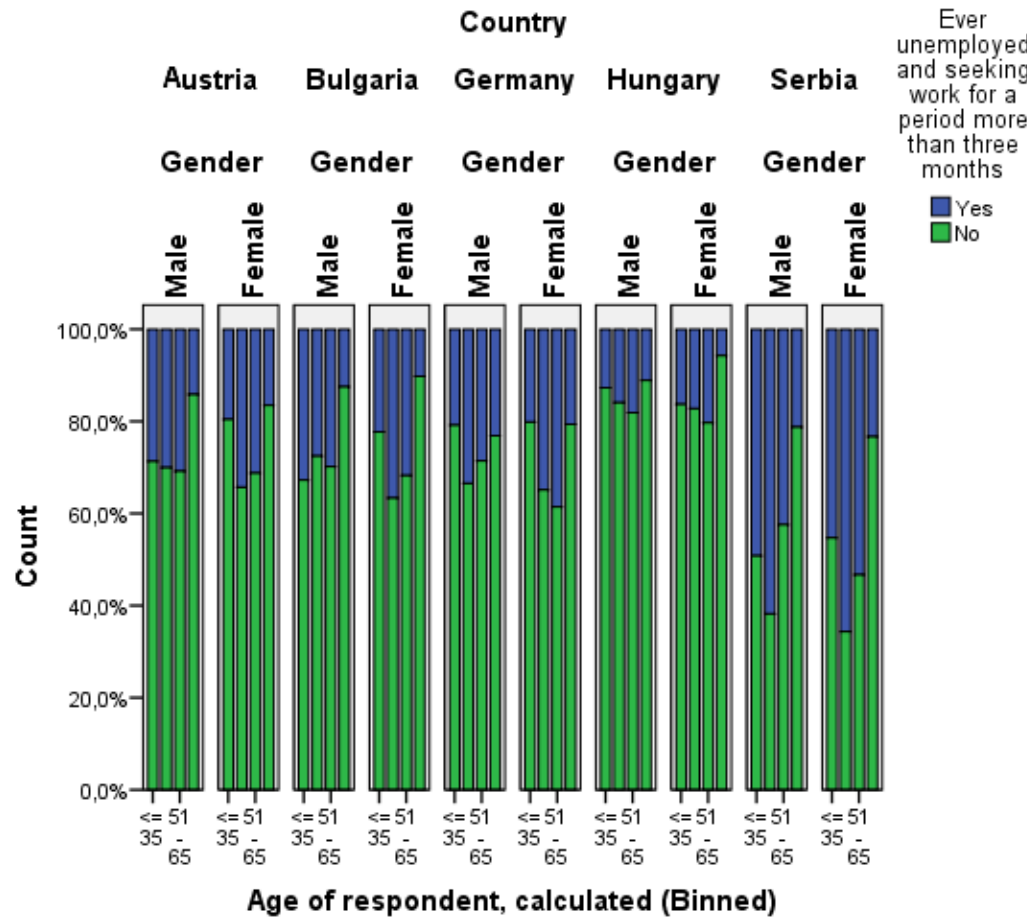
Employment insecurity decreases the subjective feeling of happiness

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- Older people in all countries have less experience with unemployment during their life compared with younger generations
- The biggest share of people without unemployment experience are living in Hungary over 80%, and the differences between the age groups are not significant.
- The 35-50 group are those, who experience more unemployment episodes in their life than older generations.

Unemployment experiences decrease happiness

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Those who assess their income/rent as justice are more happy

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- In Germany and in Austria more older people assess their income as justice compared with the other tree countries and compared with younger generations in their own country.
- Less people assess their income as justice in Bulgaria, Hungary and Serbia

Conclusions

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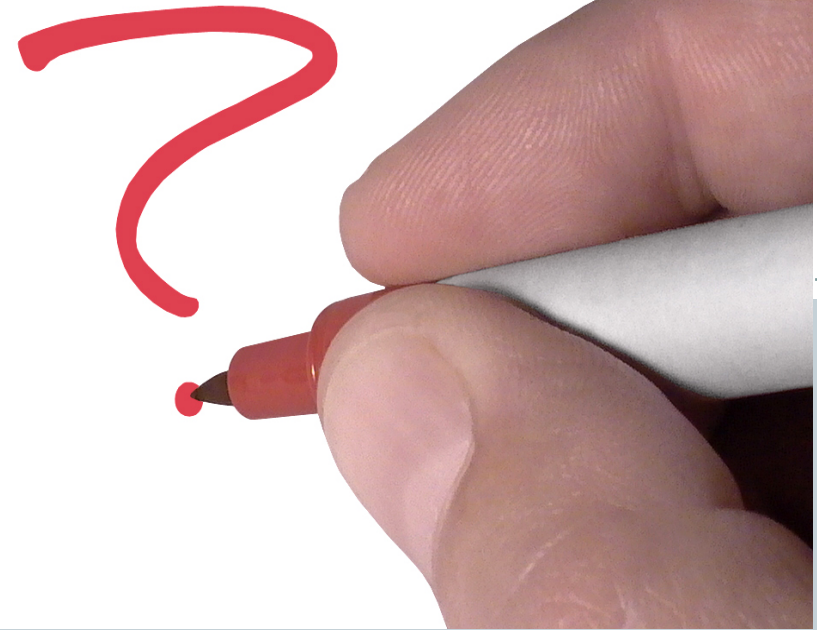
- In countries placed at lower positions on Human development index older people are less satisfied than in countries placed high on that index. In Germany and in Austria there are no big difference in the feeling of happiness between the generations.
- In Bulgaria and Serbia older people use more internet compared to older people in Austria and Hungary. That is an opportunity to be more easily connected during isolation. However language is an additional barrier .

Conclusions (2)

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- Unemployment experience in the past decreases happiness. In Hungary and in Serbia are less older people with experience of employment insecurity.
- Finding own income or rent as justice increases happiness. This is the case with older people in Germany and Austria, but not in Bulgaria, Serbia and Hungary.

Questions and DISCUSSION



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