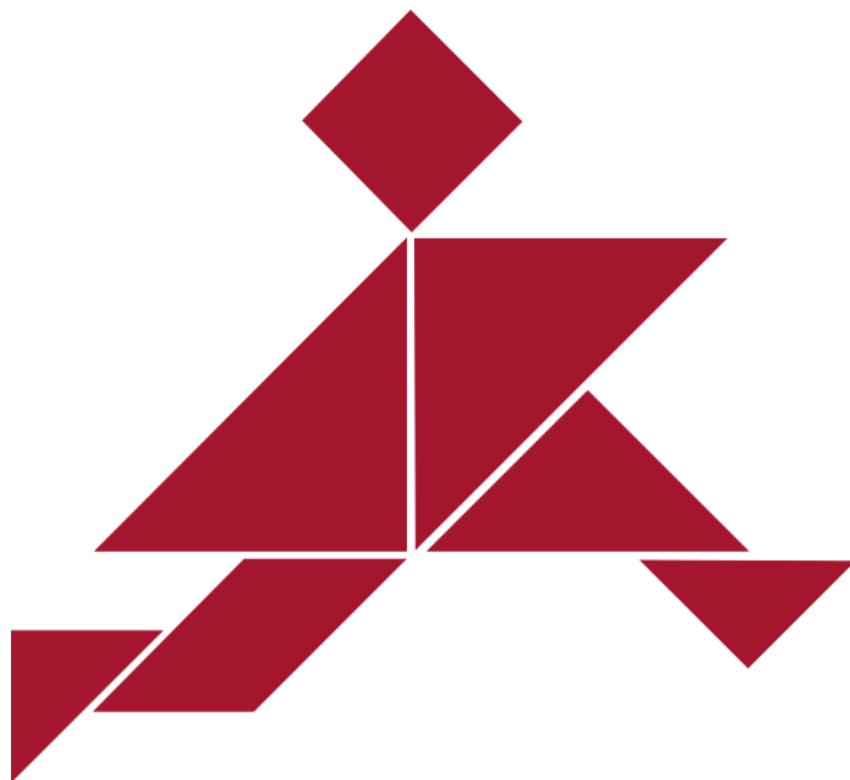

IP212: RELATIONSHIPS IN LATER LIFE

VULNERABILITIES, PROCESSES, RESOURCES, AND INTERVENTIONS



LEADERS:

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HANSJÖRG ZNOJ (UNIBE)

DARIO SPINI, DANIELA JOPP (UNIL)



Swiss National Centre of Competence in Research

OVERCOMING VULNERABILITY: LIFE COURSE PERSPECTIVES

PHASE I (2011-2014) SPOUSAL LOSS AND BREAKUP

TRAJECTORIES OF PSYCHOLOGICAL ADAPTATION

- **Aims have been achieved, research schedule respected** > Data from 2 waves of survey are solid base for Phase II
 - **Publications** *directly issued* from IP12 data:
 - Peer-reviewed papers: 3 published, 1 in press, 3 revise & resubmit; 5 in prep.;
 - Book chapters: 3 (in press); 1 LIVES working paper
 - Students qualifications: 3 PhD theses (1 per end 2014); Master theses: 3 completed, 3 in progress
 - Newsletter for participants of 1st wave;
 - Research dossiers (divorce, bereavement, long-term marriage) for the home-page, one in prep. (longitudinal data)
 - **Conferences;** Organization of a) international conference (UniGE, 2013); b) workshop with Kate Bennett/UK (UniBe, 2014)
 - **Awards:**
 - 1st Poster-Prize SSG 2014 (CHF 3'000.-) Stefanie Spahni, PhD student;
 - Seniors University Award 2013 (CHF 10'000.-) master thesis Jeanine Zwahlen
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PHASE II 2015-2018: PARTICIPANTS

■ Professors

- Pasqualina Perrig-Chiello (UniBe), Dario Spini (UniL), Hansjörg Znoj (UniBe), Daniela Jopp (UniL)

■ Senior Researcher

- Davide Morselli (UniL)

■ Doctoral students & scientific coordinator

- 3-4 Doctoral students (UniBe, UniL)
- 1 project coordinator (UniBe)

PHASE II: RESEARCH AIMS

CONTINUATION AND EXTENSION – NEW THEMES AND METHODS

- **Continuation of survey** (3rd wave 2016):
 - a) to track the trajectories of psychological adaptation to spousal loss and marital breakup after a long-term relationship;
 - b) to explore continuities and change in marital satisfaction in long-term married.

- **Intervention** for vulnerable individuals (complicated grief) recruited from the 2nd wave 2014.

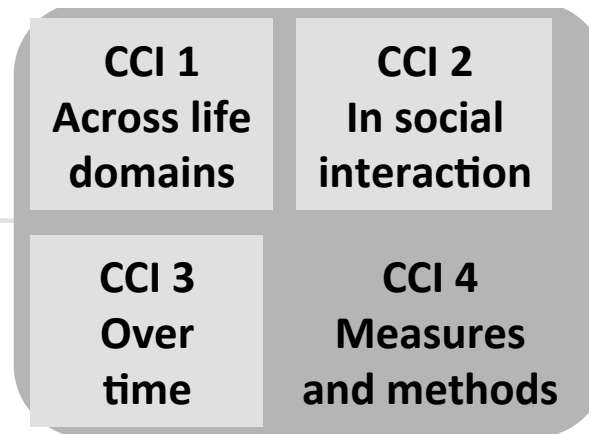
- **Exploration of identity processes** and social groups as resources for overcoming psychological vulnerability (especially due to loneliness) in older age.

PHASE II: A LIFE-COURSE PERSPECTIVE

1. *Longitudinal approach* allows to make a contribution to a better understanding of the trajectories leading to psychological adaptation, growth, or chronic vulnerability after spousal breakup or loss.
2. *Retrospective approach*, focusing on past biographical transitions and marital history, allows exploring whether psychological vulnerability after critical life events is primarily due to selection effects (i.e. negative biographical chain effects and individual predispositions), or if it is rather a question of temporary circumstances of the event (e.g. expectedness of the event or age).
3. The follow-up of the long-term married groups across various waves enables a *prospective approach* with regard to changes of these relationships (separation, divorce, bereavement).

Research questions by Cross-Cutting Issues

- Why do some individuals fail to recover from critical life events such as divorce and bereavement, while a majority adapts quite well?
- What is the role of intra- and interpersonal resources (personality, identity, social support) and of contextual & situational circumstances in overcoming psychological vulnerability?



How can psychological vulnerability following critical life events be prevented and relieved by social and psychological interventions ?

1. PSYCHOLOGICAL ADAPTATION TO MARITAL BREAKUP AND SPOUSAL LOSS (P. Perrig-Chiello)

- **Aim:** Continuation of the survey - 3rd wave in 2016.
 - **Theory:**
 - a) Divorce-stress-adjustment-model – role of stressors and resources for recovery (Amato, 2010)
 - b) Resilience and vulnerability after critical life events (Bonanno, 2004; Clark & Georgellis, 2010)
 - c) Differential impact of critical life events on various indicators of well-being (Luhmann et al., 2012).
 - **Method:** Survey 3rd wave in 2016 (2nd wave 2014 total N: 2'173 (return rate 78%): 924 divorced, 450 bereaved, 799 married).
 - a) Testing of latent transition models for the 3 groups (divorced, bereaved and married);
 - b) mediator- and moderator-analyses (role of resources and stressors).
 - **Scientific contribution:** Closing a research gap on adaptation processes to “grey divorce” and on continuities and change in long-term marriage.
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2. INTERVENTION STUDY FOR OVERCOMING VULNERABILITY (Hansjörg Znoj)

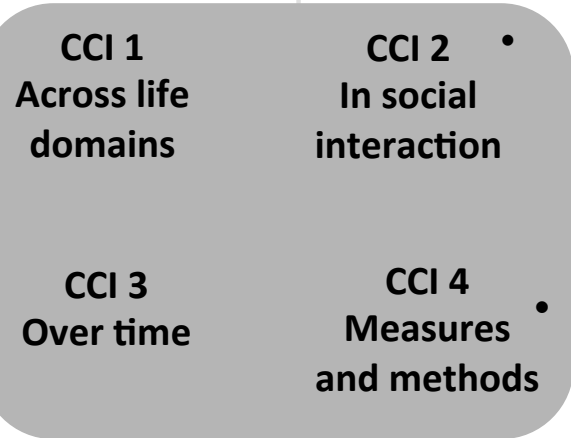
- **Aim:** To design and implement a psychological online intervention for the most vulnerable individuals in terms of psychological outcomes identified in the IP12-divorced and widowed sample (2nd wave 2014).
- **Theoretical base:** a) Divorce-stress-adjustment-model and complicated grief model (Amato, 2010; Prigerson et al. 2008); b) Restoration and cognitive restructuring of life goals after critical life events (Shear et al., 2005).
- **Method:** Randomized controlled study carried out in 2016 with a pre-post design and a follow-up of at least 3 months: 2 intervention- and 1 (waiting) control-group; 50 participants each.
- **Contribution to science and LIVES:**
 - a) Implementation of knowledge on role of stressors and resources for psychological adaptation from IP12-data of wave 1 and 2.
 - b) Unique opportunity to combine a longitudinal study with an experimental intervention.
 - c) Knowledge transfer for a widely accessible psychological intervention.

3. AGENCY, IDENTITY PROCESSES AND SOCIAL GROUPS (Dario Spini)

- **Aim:** To shed light on identity processes and social groups as resources for overcoming psychological vulnerability (especially due to loneliness) in older age.
- **Theoretical base:** Marital loss and breakup leading to identity discontinuity (liberation, isolation). Role of social groups as base of social identity and resilience.
- **Method:** Using in priority the longitudinal study carried out by IP12 in the first four years, but also other studies like VLV study (Michel Oris, IP213), the Swiss Interdisciplinary longitudinal study on the Oldest Old (Guillet, Métral & Spini, 2003; Guillet & Lalive d'Épinay, 2008), and the National Survey on Midlife Development in the U.S. (MIDUS, Brim et al., 2011; Ryff et al., 2012).
- **Mandates:** Advanced contacts with Quartiers Solidaires (Pro Senectute Vaud and Leenards Foundation funding) for a possible survey in the second phase concerning group empowerment and community interventions and mandate with the canton of Geneva concerning informal care (with Stéphanie Pin, project coordinator and Pasqualina Perrig-Chiello as scientific advisor).

LIVES Core: Research programme by Cross-Cutting Issues

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multidimensionality of vulnerability (201, 208, 214) • Spill-over effects across life domains (201, 206, 207, 213) • Subjective and factual dimensions of vulnerability (201, 206, 207, 213) • Coping and adaptation processes (201, 204, 206, 207, 208, 212) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal relationships, social groups and social identity (201, 204, 208, 212) • Institutions and welfare state policies (201, 204, 205, 207, 213) • Social Norms and normative climates (201, 205, 206) • Collective experiences (201)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heritability and early life conditions (201, 204, 207, 213) • Accumulation of (dis)advantages (201, 204, 206, 207, 208, 213, 214) • Biographisation of vulnerability (201, 204, 207, 213, 214) • Social Investments and targeted interventions (204, 205, 212, 213) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sampling design and modes of data collection (214, 201, for all IPs) • Analytical tools for longitudinal and network data (201, 208, 214, for all IPs) • Qualitative and mixed methods (201, 205, 206, 208, 212, 213) • Data and data sharing management (all IPs with data lab)



SHARED ACTIVITIES WITH OTHER LIVES-IP_s

- Continuing the collaboration with IP13-Oris, but also with IP8-Widmer.
- Organization of a workshop in spring 2016 on critical events in couples' lives with IP213 (Oris) and (IP208 Bernardi) with national and international experts (Guy Bodenmann, UZH; Deborah Carr, Rutgers University, New Brunswick/USA; Kate Bennett, Liverpool University/GB; Klaus Schneewind, Uni München). The aim of this collaboration is to produce common publications.
- Collaboration with Olivier Desrichard and Jean-François Bickel (IP213-Oris) with the aim of having a joint publication on well-being and social participation.
- Organization of a meeting on social groups and health in old age, together with Eric Widmer (IP208), Olivier Desrichard, Jean-François Bickel and Christian Maggiori (IP213) and international colleagues, Fabio Sani (Dundee University, UK), Catherine Haslam and Jolanda Jetten (University of Queensland, Australia) planned for 2016. This event could be associated to the organization of a doctoral module on identity and social groups as resources.