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CO–RESIDENCE OF ADULT CHILDREN AND AGING PARENTS – AN OPTION FOR CARE IN OLD AGE?**

Abstract. *The article explores the views of three age groups among the Slovenian population about co-residence as one option for filial care of the aged, by using interviews obtained in the DEMHOW project. Co-residence between adult children and their parents was found to be the most important reference point for seeking a solution to the problem of a frail elderly person, unable to care for herself. Co-residence was the starting point for consideration, the first option to examine. The interviews revealed two significant underlying concerns among people. Firstly, the middle cohort was found to be already greatly overburdened by a high and rising work load; secondly, older cohorts recognised the family as a significant source of contacts and of emotional ties that could be easily jeopardised by a too heavy caring burden. The family was found to be a major discussion group within which the changing roles of generations and heavy societal pressures are articulated and reflected.*

Key words: *old age, filial care, co-residence, welfare, Slovenia*

1195

Introduction

In ageing societies such as Slovenia, the provision of welfare for the aged is increasingly becoming an important issue, as the economically active generations, in both the public and the private spheres, are responding to challenges related to the fact that older people are becoming ever older and more numerous. On the one hand, societies and their public policies are considering ways not only to provide adequate and readily available services, but also to keep the financial sustainability of public systems, particularly the

pension, health insurance and long term care systems, demanding increasing financial input. On the other hand, in their daily lives and on the personal level, people of the active generation are involved in various ways in helping to solve the old age challenges of their aged relatives; they increasingly face difficulty in combining obligations in professional and family life. This issue, referred to as the work/life balance, is well recognised both within the European policy agenda, as well as in social studies and literature (EC, 2007; Armingeon and Bonoli, 2006; Saraceno, 2008). In addition, the multidimensional significance of intergenerational solidarity is increasingly recognised (Šadl and Hlebec, 2010; Hlebec, Šircelj and Mrzel, 2010).

Challenges that accompany ageing and the provision of welfare, security and inclusion in old age are numerous. Not least, they involve concerns about finances, health, housing and care when needed. People themselves respond differently to dealing with these challenges; some stick to more rational ways, such as 'life planning' and develop various strategies, while others take life more as it comes; some tend to make their own individual choices; others rely strongly on their family networks. Aging people also face dilemmas and make choices by prioritizing, particularly among needs and in some welfare domains, while considering others as less important. Some might be heavy spenders on health and wellness products, while others minimise spending and hold on to their savings and financial and housing equity, which they perceive as a buffer and source of security for any emergency that might arise. The issue of how different needs might be prioritized and resources converted can be seen in terms of trade-offs between different welfare domains, particularly highlighted in the case of housing and old-age income (Kemeny, 2005; Doling and Elsinga, 2006; Elsinga and Mandič, 2010), where homeowners might minimize their housing (for instance, by downsizing) and increase their income.

In this paper we discuss co-residence of adult children and their parents as one option for filial care for the aged, within the broader context of old age welfare. Such discussion of co-residence between adult children and parents is quite a specific perspective compared to the other, much more widely debated one; staying in the parental home by young adults, with a focus on delayed home-leaving (Allen et al., 2004; Iacovou, 2002; Vogel, 2002; Ule and Kuhar, 2008; Mandič, 2008). The phenomenon where young adults do not leave their parents or delay such 'nest-leaving' is about youth, about how they move away from their parents and start a new household; it is about the beginning of their independent life, while their parents go on with theirs. Unlike this perspective, we focus on a later stage in the lives of both children and parents; this is when adult children are active and most likely have their own families, while their parents are already aged, retired, needing special care and perhaps no longer able to maintain independent

1196

lives. In such a case, co-residence with their adult children might be an option for support, along with others, most notably intensification of home-care or access to specific housing arrangements such as supported housing or homes for the elderly.

The aim of this article is to explore the views and attitudes held by the Slovenian population about the potential of co-residence as an option for filial care of the aged, by using interviews obtained in the DEMHOW project. During the interviews, co-residence between adult children and their aging parents was approached from different angles and within different frame-works, so the issue appeared related to various other issues accompanying the provision of welfare in old age and the roles of family and different gen-erations. So the interviews are also used to identify and explore other con-cerns and issues that surfaced. We also explore whether views and attitudes differ betwen cohorts.

So the structure of the paper is the following. We start with an overview of some of the crucial debates that appear in contemporary social science with regard to the co-residence of adult children and aging parents. _Empiri-cal contextual data are presented comparatively. The second part presents the interviews and highlights specific findings. In conclusion, we summa-rize the findings, relate these to specific features of the Slovenian context and articulate some hypotheses that could be verified in the coming years.

Intergenerational relations, welfare and co-residence in ageing societies – theoretical background

Welfare, care provision and old age

The welfare of a population is an outcome of various resources: from the state and public sector; from private providers both market and non-profit and from the family and kinship. While the coexistence of these actors within a welfare system is generally referred to as the 'welfare mix', more specific notions are also used, referring to particular constellations, most notably 'welfare regimes' (Esping-Andresen, 1990). However, various parts of the population, not least different age groups, have specific needs and require specific ways and combinations of welfare provision. Esping-Andersen (2009: 149) summarizes how the elderly package their welfare: the family provides services, such as care, consumption and monetary income; markets deliver work incomes that are gradually transformed into retirement wealth, while private providers sell care and other services and insurance; governments redistribute incomes and services across the life course and between family services. Most retired people 'receive a mix of all three welfare inputs', but everywhere government redistribution is the dominant pillar in the provision of pension income.

In contemporary discussion of the welfare of the aged, two topics loom large. First is the relation between cohorts: i.e. between the older and the middle-aged active population, mostly referred to as the intergenerational contract and implying the intergenerational flow of resources and services. The other issue is the relation between the private (i.e. familial) and the public pillar of welfare. Unlike the first issue, which is mostly subject to empirical identification of the transfer of finances and various support services (see Albertini et al., 2007), the other issue is more complex and theoretically and empirically stimulating; these debates are focused around the question whether strong welfare-state arrangements would undermine intergenerational family solidarity, known as the 'crowding out' hypothesis.

Focusing specifically on care for the aged, the SHARE project has gathered considerable internationally comparable data used to verify this hypothesis, but not much evidence was found to support it. Sarasa and Billingsley (2008) tried to verify this hypothesis and compared different welfare regimes under the assumption that the availability of the non-familial elder care provision alters intergenerational relations; it was hypothesized that adult children 's involvement in caring for their parents would be lower if non-familial elder care were more available. However, they found that, while home care services do replace time allocated by a relative, they do not crowd the family out; on the contrary, they stimulate the relatives to keep in contact with the dependent person and to give personal care and household help.

The question whether social services replace family relations was also empirically tested by Keck (2008). In his analysis, a distinction was used between countries that provide abundant services and those with relatively few services; the Nordic countries served as service-rich countries, while the Mediterranean countries were seen to constitute a service-low cluster, where kin bears the main responsibility for care provision. In analysing the SHARE data, the thesis that care services crowd out the family was not confirmed. It was found that when care arrangements also include formal care givers, this does not lead to a lower share of children providing care for parents; nor do children, who do not provide care for parents, have less parental contact.

This issue was also observed by Esping-Andersen (2009) in his latest work. By observing and interpreting the magnitude of intergenerational care giving from the SHARE data, he pointed out that, in the case of care for aging parents, the frequency (incidence) of interaction with and care from their adult children is high; however, the frequency of caring is inversely related to its intensity. In Denmark, for example, the frequency of children caring for aging parents is the highest (20 %), but the intensity is the lowest (2.6 hours per week). This frequency is much higher – and the intensity

1198

lower – than in more 'familialistic' countries such as Italy and Spain, with the lowest frequency (12%), but the highest intensity (29 and 16 hours of care per week). In contrast to Denmark with its well developed care services, in these two countries there is a shortfall in the day-care supply. Esping-Andersen (2009: 92) concludes that the lower caring frequencies in Southern Europe perhaps indicate 'a reluctance to care at all if one faces the prospect of very heavy burden'. Longevity often implies levels of frailty that require intensive, permanent care and 'if family members are called upon for heavy caring, it is likely that many will shy away altogether, and that would simply imply a solidarity loss' (Esping-Andersen, 2009: 151). Moreover, he argues that in modern societies family well-being presupposes 'defamilisation'; externalisation of care services, such as universal day-care, is needed to give families realistic options, and only if the potential care obligations are manageable, will the intergenerational ties seem stronger and more frequent. Because the dependence on familial care may actually weaken bonds of kinship, Esping-Andersen (2009: 150) even argues that 'strongly familialistic welfare models may be counter-productive in terms of nurturing familial solidarity'.

Changing kinship patterns and generational roles

In ageing societies, as a result of rising life expectancy and low fertility, the kinship networks and family structures in developed countires are also changing. Saraceno (2008) highlights two particular changes: verticalisation of the kinship structure, and an extended duration of generational roles. The verticalisation of the kinship structure implies that close kinship relations, irrespective of habitation, are becoming dominated by vertical relations – i.e., those between different generations, while horizontal relations – i.e., those between siblings – become less important; thus the kinship structure is slimming down and becoming 'tall and lean'. The extent of such verticalisation differs across countries; Saraceno argues that in Italy, for instance, the chances of becoming a great-grand mother and belonging to a four-generation family, are lower than, for instance, in Sweden. Three and four generation families are more common in Scandinavia and France than in Italy, Greece or Germany.

Another feature, highlighted by Saraceno, is the extended duration of generational roles. The duration of the parental and the child role has been prolonged; so, adult children and their parents experience a 'process of co-ageing in so far as they spend many years during which they both are old' (Saraceno, 2008: 8). Among all generational roles, those of child and parent are the longest. Saraceno moreover points out how these roles, as children and parents age, also diversify over time. When children mature, there is first a period when the burden of intergenerational obligations for both

generations becomes lighter. Later, these obligations might increase over a longer period of time, more and longer for the children than had been the case for the parents. The middle-aged children of elderly parents may at the same time be parents of young adults who are starting their life, and also grandparents of grandchildren. If their elderly parent becomes dependent, 'they are called upon to redefine the child's role into one more similar to a parental, caring role... While in the past the main turning points for a child included leaving the parental household and then becoming a parent, now there is this additional passage of becoming, to a greater or a lesser degree, a semi-parental figure for one's own parents' (2008: 8). Saraceno finds the present cohort of 50–60 year olds to be the first cohort to experience this 'as an almost normative passage in the life course'.

Older people's living arrangements and cohabitation with adult children

One particular characteristic of older people's living arrangements is that they live in smaller, particularly single households more frequently than other cohorts. As reported by Iacovou (2002), based on the ECHP 1994, for women, aged 65 and more, 'living alone' was the living arrangement that in Nordic countries applied to 51%, and in Southern/catholic to only 33%; furthermore, a child was a member of 3% of household in Nordic countries, and 31% in '–'Southern' countries. Co-residence between the generations was thus more common in Southern countries.

The same basic pattern is also confirmed in 2007, according to EQLS (Šnajder, 2010). In Sweden, Finland and Denmark, among people aged 65 or more, there were between 1.3 and 7.4 percent cohabiting with their child, while in Portugal (27%), in Italy (25%), in Spain (30.5%), in Greece (33%) and in Malta (41.4%). However, the percentage for some new member states was also quite high, particularly in Romania (9.8%) and Slovenia (38.1%), which had the third highest frequency among the EU27.

Given that co-residence between the elderly and their adult children is very high in South Europe, and rather marginal in most other European countries, it is understandable that it has also been more often discussed in southern countries and in relation to South European family patterns and familialism in welfare provision. According to Esping-Andersen (2009: 150), cohabitation with children is an indicator of strong familialism.

The factors that lead to co-residence in Southern countries, were discussed by Iacovou (2004), who found that it may at least partly occur because adult children have not yet left home, rather than because of any active preference. She further maintains empirically that those Southern Europeans who do not co-reside with their children are more likely to move in with their children than those in Northern/Protestant, or particularly Nordic countries. One reason for moving is to receive care from the children.

1200

However cohabitation between generations is not simply a case of getting care and support from the younger generation; it is also a case of helping the younger generations, particularly with childcare. Furthermore, Iacovou finds that health is an important predictor of co-residence in southern countries, while the trade-off between residential independence and financial comfort is important only for people with low incomes.

A further account of the features of co-residence between adult children and elderly parents in Southern Europe is provided by Poggio (2008), who examined the relation between family housing help to younger members and further mutual support between parents and adult children. He found partial evidence of the continuing importance of a 'care-for-inheritance generational contract'; although it is less common than in the past, he finds that in Italy co-residence still persists as a combination of both housing support received by the young and care provision received by adult parents. His empirical analysis also highlighted the importance of territorial proximity in sustaining intergenerational support for those children and parents who do not co-reside.

Co-residence between adult children and their aged parents in South European countries is very important; it is a crucial element within the mix of welfare provision for the elderly and in the intra-generational flow of resources and services. It is so important that it can change the whole picture of the intra-generational flow of resources and its intensity, as established by (Albertini, Kohli and Vogel, 2007: 326). Thus, when their analysis of the flow of resources and services between generations was limited to non – co-residing parents and children, the South European elderly were found to be included in relatively little resource-exchange with their children; however, after co-residing households were included, the big picture changed and led to the conclusion that 'co-residence is the Southern European way of transferring resources from parents to children and vice versa' (Albertini, Kohli and Vogel, 2007: 326).

Views on co-residence as an option among three cohorts of Slovenian population

Data, selected Area and Methodology

The data and methodology used in this article are based on the project Demographic Change and Housing, DEMHOW, under the 7th Framework programme; the aim of the project is to investigate the ways in which demographic change and housing wealth are linked in eight EU countries (Doling, 2007). This paper explores the views expressed through interviews in 30 Slovenian households as part of the project. The region selected for interviewing was the Savinjska region, which rates in terms of economic

performance, as upper middle among the twelve regions. The interviews were concentrated in Celje.

We used a questionnaire that was developed together with research partners from all 8 countries and was translated into Slovenian. The questionnaire was semi-structured and included a number of vignettes as a way to structure discussion. By presenting hypothetical situations, vignettes serve as a way to access the implicit norms present in the respondents' reasoning (Soydan, 1996). The adequacy of the translation was tested and adjusted. Interviews took place in June and July 2009, at people's homes, and lasted from forty five minutes to two hours. The starting point for drawing the sample constituted five areas in Celje, containing different types of housing (pre-war inner city tenements, multi-dwelling neighbourhoods built during the seventies and those built recently, pre-war single family housing areas and newer, single family housing areas). Both the upper and the lower income extremes were avoided. From these areas, a random selection of 214 persons was drawn from the telephone company data base and invitation letters were sent, encouraging people to contact the person in charge by telephone. In this way 14 respondents were chosen. For additional recruitment, the snow-ball method was used, based on the links provided by interviewees and later by interviewers, so some interviews were made in Velenje and Prestranek. Finally the quotas were reached; 10 interviews were done for each of the three age cohorts: the young, from 25 to 35 years of age; the middle cohort, from 45 to 55 years, and the older cohort, from 65 to 75 years; in each cohort there were 6 respondents with children and 4 without children, irrespective of their place of residence.

Co-residence as an option when elderly parents need care

Discussion of this issue was initiated by reading the following vignette:

A 75-year-old lady lives alone in a small house with a garden that she owns. She has been managing at home but is becoming ever more frail. One of her children lives in a village 30 kilometres away and visits her every week to help her clean the house and do the shopping. Her other child lives 100 kilometres away and visits on a Sunday to cheer the older lady up. The elderly lady's health is deteriorating and she is no longer able to care for herself.

What should happen now? What are the options? Who do you think should be responsible for her care? Why?

When acquainted with the situation in the vignette and with the emerging problem, the most common initial reaction was to turn towards the children of the old lady and towards the option of co-residence, either by a child moving in with her or by her moving in with one of her children. However, in many cases this initial consideration was found not to be feasible or realistic; obstacle was the possibility that the child might not be single, but instead might have a family and related responsibilities. So, another option was arrived at – a home for the elderly. All in all the following typical solutions were chosen: living with a child, chosen by 10 respondents, a home for the elderly, chosen by 12 respondents, while the rest chose other solutions, mainly the status quo with additional support at home.

However, the frequency of the solutions chosen varies between the cohorts. Living with children was chosen by one out of two respondents of the two younger cohorts. In contrast, in the oldest age group this option was chosen only by one respondent without children and by none of the respondents with children; the solutions chosen by others in this group were split equally between a home for the elderly and the status quo with additional services. This group was clearly oriented towards prolonging the stay at home as long as possible and getting supplementary solutions. When considering these options, some from the oldest group clearly expressed the danger of being a burden to their children and thus spoiling their relationship:

'Well, look, she could theoretically go stay with the children, but I would not advise her to do so. Because … such an old lady is a big burden for this young family that is already well overburdened, you know. Now, if this lady was still in such a condition that she could provide help to the family, that would be fine, but so… to push something… I think then conflicts would come and in that case a home for the elderly is better (65–75 years, woman, with children).

These thoughts express consideration of a delicate shift from the 'giving' to the 'receiving' role for the older group, as well as the importance of maintaining good relations with the family and avoiding work overload.

Among other solutions, supported housing was mentioned once, and once the sale of her house, with her moving close to one of her children, but not in with them.

Interestingly, the gender of the children was not found to hold much importance and was never explicitly mentioned; this is surprising, as the gender bias in provision of care is well acknowledged. However, sometimes when discussing the children, the verbs revealed (by virtue of the nature of the Slovenian language) that the child's gender was taken for granted. In

1203

this case, the gender mostly corresponded to that of the respondent, thus revealing a high level of identification of respondents with the actors in the vignette, as well as the strong involvement – in principle – of both male and female children..

When asked specifically who should be responsible for caring for the old lady, children and their responsibility in caring for parents loomed large.

However, there was a huge diversity in understanding and perception of the degree and the form of this responsibility. Some respondents understood it in the sense that children are directly responsible for offering care and to providing complete assistance. Some saw such help as feasible only to a certain point, beyond which professional care should be sought. It was often specified that children are fully responsible for arranging and organising such professional help, including its costs. In the oldest age group, children's responsibility for care was acknowledged, but specifically in the sense of making arrangements for care, helping a parent to get services and to enter a home for the elderly.

There were three main explanations of why children are responsible for caring for their parents. The first type was that it was the legal obligation of children (mentioned twice).

The second type was that there was an exchange: care in old age in exchange for housing and money in the form of an inheritance. These two types were expressed mostly by respondents without children. The third, absolutely dominant explanation was that it is natural, taken for granted, sometimes expressed as a feeling of obligation to provide care in return for the care received during one's childhood.

However, a number of times respondents needed to spell out that such responsibility is limited:

> *'Yes, children are responsible, but they can't be directly involved in such care. They are neither capable nor qualified, and also their jobs would suffer and, after all, they are not even obliged to do that... to be present 24 hours a day there and change their parents' diapers ... no... We could talk about children repaying their parents for their care in childhood, but no, I do not support such a perception' (25–35 years, woman, with children).*

There seem to be many ambiguities here in clarifying and accepting the role of the helping professions as a substitute for traditional family care, particularly in the case of a home for the elderly. These ambiguities relate to two issues that were brought up by the respondents. The first issue is about the point in time (in terms of an event or a state) that triggers the need for and acceptance of such help from the outside. Hence, in several interviews

this point was related to 'cleanness', marking the boundary between an independent and dependent life; in one case it was a 'broken leg after a fall' that marked the end of independent life.

The second issue involved reaching a decision about what to do. This issue was mentioned very often. Some saw it in an authoritarian way as a problem of how the old lady should be persuaded and by whom to enter a home for the elderly, which was taken for granted as the best or even the only solution. Quite often respondents considered the will of the old lady as being important, and only if she herself chose to enter a home would this be acceptable. When considering the option of starting living with her children, it was quite often mentioned that her two children would have to discuss it and decide which one should respond. Moreover, all other options were repeatedly identified as needing discussion by all actors in the vignette, in the search for the best solution.

> *I: Who should be responsible for her care?*
> *R: Well, by all means this is a matter of agreement... for the children and all... they should sit down at a table, discuss this, see what they can... and what would suit her to... Everything together, all sides should be considered ...*
> *I. Why so?*
> *R: Well, such a moment comes once in your life ... it surely must be discussed, what to do, a wise solution found, that is good for all, also for this old woman... as well as for her children. We know how it is for them nowadays ... they work all day long ... it is not easy... But these things should be discussed earlier... What is in the person's mind when he is old...what he thinks is to be done once you reach such a point ... Well, we discuss this at home...and when it gets thus far both our mothers would probably decide on the home ...they can see that we do not have the time ... We are away from home practically all day (45–55 years,* woman, with children*).*

As in this citation, also in other interviews reference was frequently made to the heavy burden, particularly the work load, of the middle cohort.

Sharing the cost of paying for professional services and above-standard treatment in a home for the elderly was highlighted as an issue to be discussed and collectively decided on.

Generally, coming to a decision and deliberation were often implied in the answers, sometimes in the form of multiple options that need to be ranked by actors in the vignette; some even spelled it out as a very important, collective decision, leading to a solution that is best for and accepted by all.

Compared to the family, particularly the children, the responsibility of the state and its agencies was mentioned much less frequently; the responsibility was acknowledged as resting on a public home for the elderly, the local community, a centre for social work and home services. The role of the state was seen as a residual – just in case the family could not manage.

Finally, let us examine respondents' views about co-residence as a way of increasing retirement income. Speculation about the possibility that co-residence, along with numerous other options, could be a solution for economising and increasing older people's resources, was initiated by a vignette describing the situation of a recently retired couple, who own a dwelling in a rural area, and now, having difficulty maintaining their standard of living, are considering ways of increasing their income. Respondents were asked to identify options for the couple and give them an advice on what could be done.

A number of different options were mentioned by respondents, often various options in combination. The most frequently identified options for increasing income – referred to by 2 out of 3 respondents – were a job and productive use of their garden/farm land. A third, popular option, mentioned by 1 out of 3 respondents, concerned their housing: exchanging it for a smaller flat, renting it to a tenant or inviting grownup children to return; by sharing the costs, all would profit. However, the particular option of co-residence was mentioned by two respondents: by a woman from the youngest cohort, who added that in such a case the children would need to have more freedom; and by a man in the middle age group, who added that mature children would be more considerate and easier for their parents to live with. Co-residence thus did not really figure as a feasible option for increasing retirement income, and was not seen to provide a trade-off between financial gain and the freedom of independent living. Worth noticing is that no one from the oldest cohort considered this option.

Discussion and conclusions

We examined cohabitation between adult children and parents as it figures in peoples' accounts about old age care and the differing roles of generations. While on the societal level population ageing creates various tensions and challenges to be faced, these are also mirrored on the individual level, in the daily lives of people and in the ways they perceive the responsibilities of different generations and their options for responding. We also tried to identify the issues that are raised and within which the underlying concerns are framed. In short, we tried to detect the perceived problems and how are they articulated and framed within a specific social context.

Co-residence between adult children and their parents was found to be

1206

the most important reference point for seeking a solution to the problem of a frail elderly person, unable to care for herself. Co-residence was the starting point for consideration, the first option to examine. However, while one third of the respondents stuck to this option and embraced it, others continued reflecting on the possibilities, and after through consideration and acknowledgment of some obstacles, arrived at other two options: prolonging the status quo with additional support services, and moving to a home for the elderly. The indicative feature is the divergence in opinions of different cohorts. The option of cohabiting with children was supported by one half of both the younger and the middle groups, and by practically none of the older group, who opted equally for the other two options. Why is co-residence relatively well supported by younger groups but refused by the oldest? The answer could only be hypothesized. One possible answer is that for the younger group the problem and the answer are more projective and imaginary, not rooted in their daily experience, so they turned to the most habitual, perhaps idealised solution of intergenerational solidarity, not yet spoiled by daily practicalities, of which older people, in contrast, might be more aware. The second explanation might be that cohorts diverge in their norms and expectations with regard to family roles and responsibilities, indicating a reluctance on the part of the older cohort to accept easily the caring role of their children beyond a certain point. And of course, there are also some cohort-specific norms and attitudes pertaining to the post-war generations, which have experienced difficulties, hard work, effort and saving and thus tend to be self-sustaining and independent.

Whatever the explanation, the older generation, to a considerable extent, seems to accept realistic, though limited options, split between home based support and homes for the elderly, probably in this chronological order. The issues raised in interviews reveal two important underlying concerns and norms. The first is that the middle cohort is already overburdened; this perception suitably embodies one of the significant structural factors of contemporary Slovenian society and economy: the high and rising work load of the active population (Stanojevič, 2009). The second is the significance of the family as a source of contacts and emotional ties, which should be protected and not jeopardised by a too heavy caring burden. What loomed large also was the role of the family as a discussion group, within which the changing roles of generations are articulated, but where societal pressures are also active and taken into consideration.

While the interviews provided an account of co-residence as a potential option for old age care, thus revealing many old age care considerations and norms, they did not tell much about the phenomenon of actual co-residence between adult children and parents, which is comparatively high in Slovenia. According to EQLS, it encompasses 38% of the older population,

1207

Slovenia being the third highest in the EU. Neither could we unravel the reasons why co-residence in Slovenia is enduring into the third millennium. One tiny part of the explanation involves farming families, where co-residing is traditionally frequent (Kneževič Hočevar and Černič Istenič, 2008; Kolarič et al., 2010; Barbič 2000). Other reasons could be the lack of support services for older people in rural areas (Hojnik-Zupanc, 1995; Nagode et al, 2006). However, this phenomenon, an indicator of familalism in old age care in Slovenia, remains a challenge for further examination and explanation. While the Slovenian welfare system was found to combine features of diverse welfare regimes (Kolarič et al., 2009), when it comes to housing and family support, there seem to be many similarities with the Southern European familialistic system.

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1208

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1209