

## **The life course in qualitative research on work and retirement**

This paper will briefly outline key selected life-course theoretical approaches to work and retirement including cumulative dis/advantage, cumulative inequalities and (gendered) political economy of ageing approaches. This will be followed by an overview of some key areas and issues that have been addressed by qualitative researchers using life course and related approaches in relation to work, health and retirement and will identify areas that have not yet been adequately addressed. I will discuss what qualitative research from a life course perspective can contribute to an understanding of (gendered) ageing, work (paid and unpaid), retirement including pensions and employment policy. I will draw on the approach taken in my current comparative research project on Gender Older Workers and the Life Course in the US and Ireland to illustrate this. Finally, I will discuss fruitful avenues for future research from a qualitative life course perspective.