



Household Solutions, Policy Blind Spots: Mapping the Gendered and Economic Impact of Unpaid Elder Care and the Socio- Economic Realities

Özge İzdeş and Emel Memiş

GENDERING MACROECONOMICS

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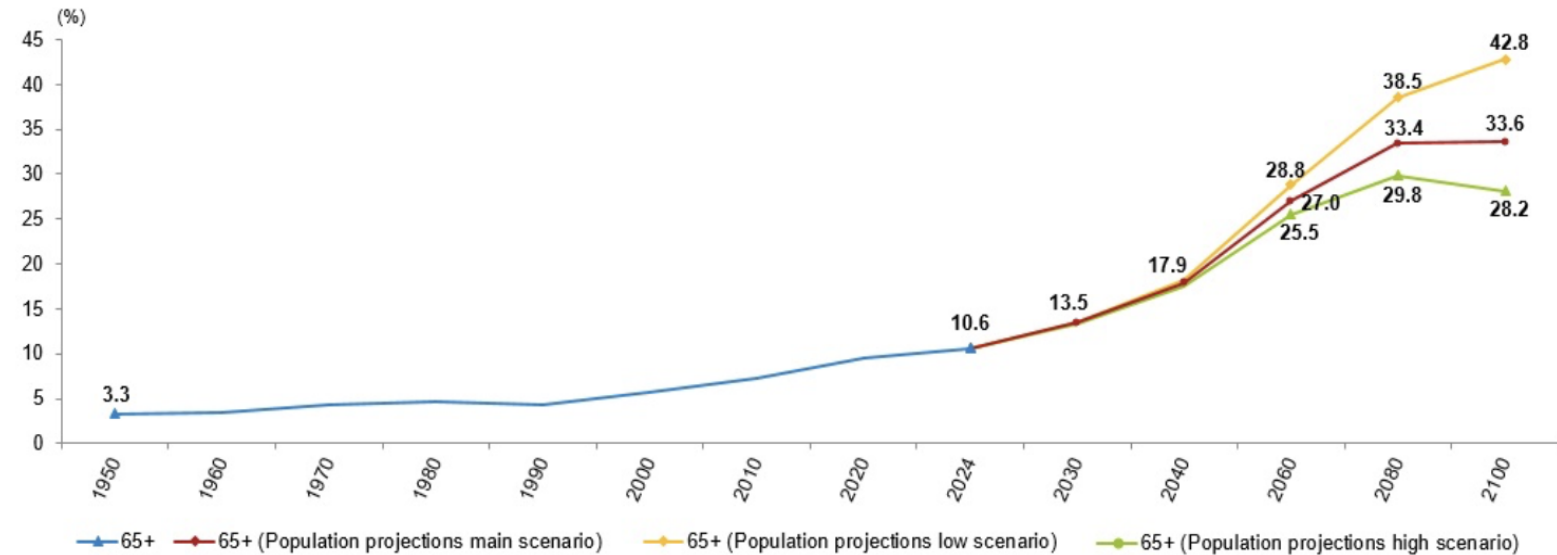
Objective

- Despite population aging and increasing long-term eldercare needs, the responsibility for care continues to fall primarily on families — and disproportionately on women within households.
- Labour market related challenges and gender disparities in the labour market results with worsening of the income inequality and increase the risk of poverty for women — particularly among older women.
- **Family coping strategies** rely heavily on the *pooling of income and time*, reinforcing **intergenerational transfers of care work among women**.
- Building on our previous study using **TUS 2014–2015**, where we examined care transfer dynamics across generations of women and its impact on caregivers' employment:
- **In this analysis**, using *matched data* from **TUS 2014–2015** and the **2015 Survey on Income and Living Conditions**, we investigate how providing eldercare affects **household material deprivation and overall livelihood**.

Background: Aging Population in Türkiye

- 65+ population was:
7.550.727 in 2019 to
9.112.298 by 2024
20.7% ↑
- Global 2050 estimate is 16% of pop, for Türkiye 20,86% of the population
- A faster aging trend than the global average.

Proportion of elderly population, 1950-2100



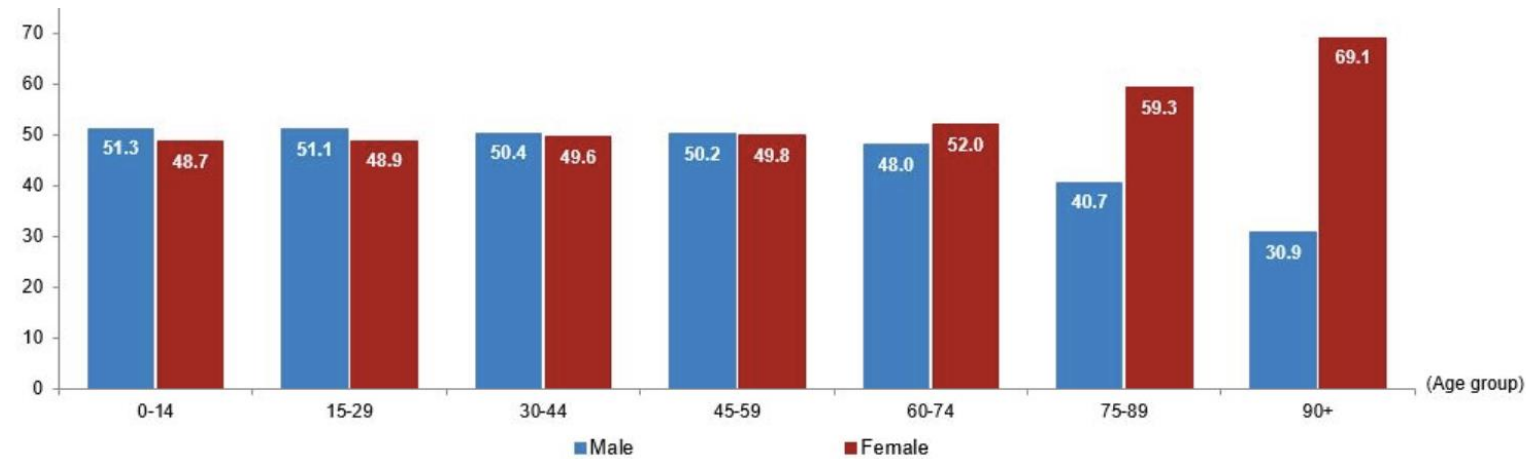
Source: TurkStat, Population Censuses, 1950-2000

TurkStat, Address Based Population Registration System, 2010-2024

TurkStat, 2024 Population Projections, 2030-2100

Proportion of population by sex and age groups

Source: TURKSTAT, Women in Statistics



- 9 million 112 thousand 298 elderly: 55,4% women.
- life expectancy at birth was 77.3 years at total, 74.7 years for men and 80.0 years for women
- 10.8% of elderly men vs. 45.7% of elderly women are widows.
- **The life-course disadvantages faced by women**—interrupted employment, lower lifetime earnings, and unequal access to pensions—accumulate into old-age poverty and dependence, particularly in widowhood or after divorce.
- Hence older women constitute the group with the fastest growing dependency on the state and social policies

Elderly Care Gap in Türkiye

Elderly population (2024)

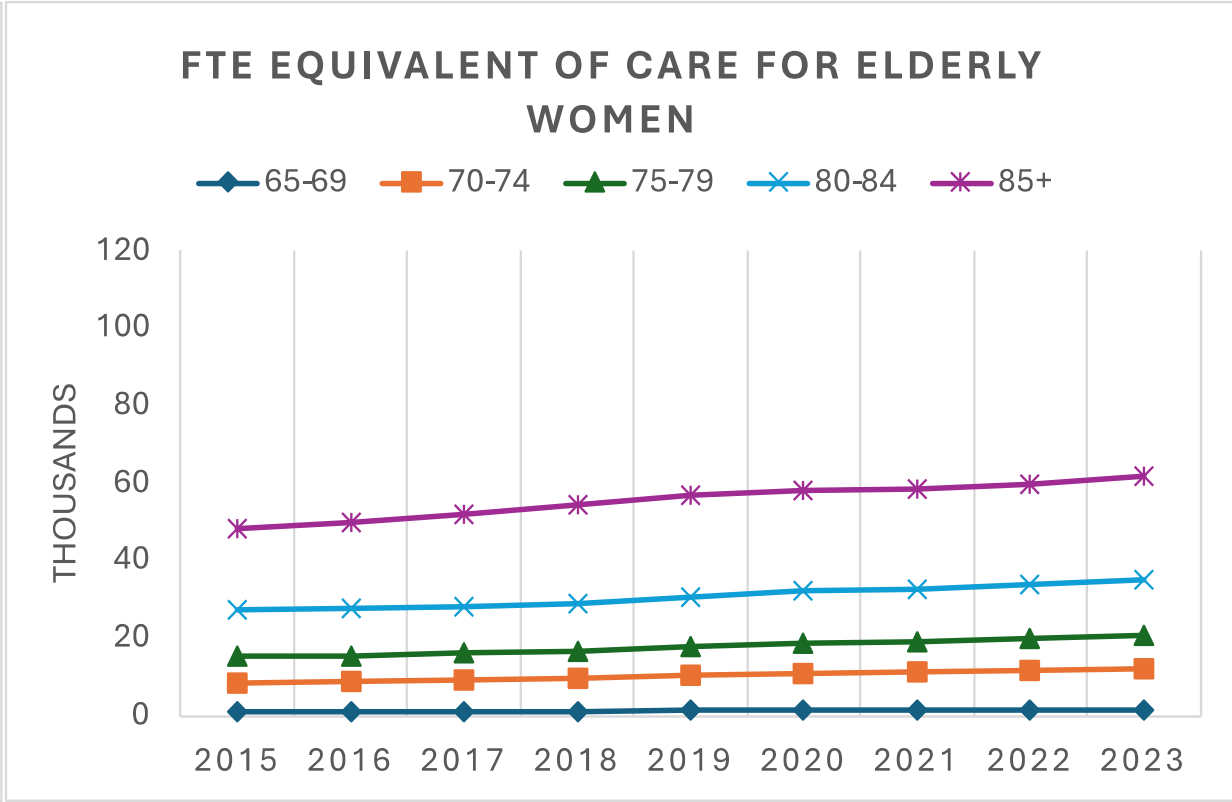
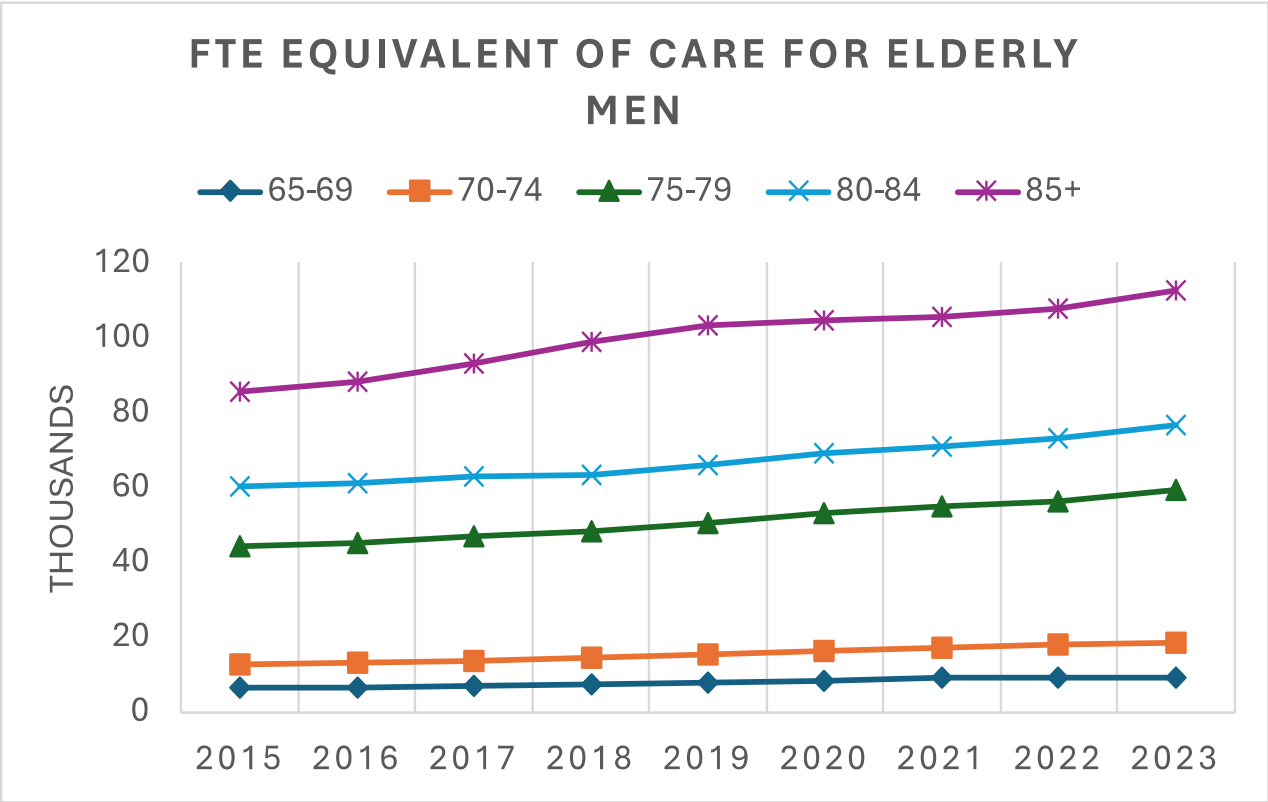
9 million 112 thousand 298

- Projecting elderly care to anticipate growing demand (Memiş and İzdeş, 2025)
 - based on time-use data elderly care module

Type of Elderly Care Services	2012	2024-December
Nursing Homes	10.961	14.701
Private Nursing Homes	6.350	13.310
Elderly Care Homes	34	14
Elderly Day Care Centers		740
Nursing Homes Belonging to Other Public Institutions (Ministry of National Education, Municipalities)	1.975	1.903
TOTAL	19.320	30.668
Home -based Care Beneficiaries	400.347	542.619

Source: <https://www.aile.gov.tr/eyhgm/istatistikler/>

Projected ELDERLY Care needs



Source: Calculations based on TUS-2014-15 and TurkStat Population Statistics, 2023.

Accumulated life-course disadvantages and dependency of women due to uneven care responsibility:

- LFPw is low (36%), and 47% of women out of LF, report care and hh responsibilities as the reason.
- Having a child under 3 years old decreases employment rate of women (25-49 ages) by half (56,2% to 28%)
- When employed;
 - 87% of women continue to care for their kids under 15
 - Part-time employment is more than twice as common among women –care responsibility
 - Hours of employment (Memiş and İzdeş, 2018)
 - Intermittent employment
 - Informal employment-without insurance

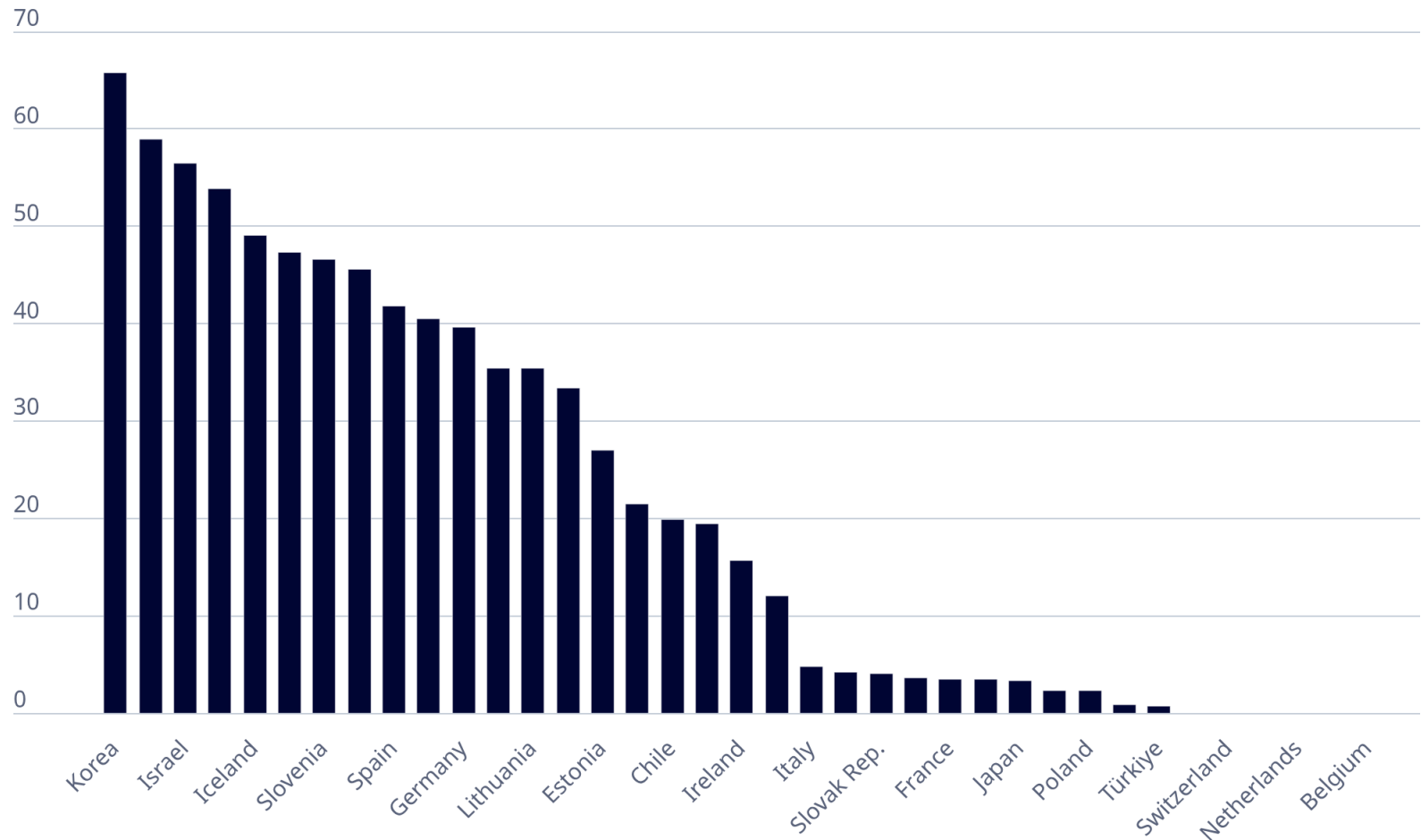
Gender wage gap

Gender Pensions Gap

Child care?

Enrolment rate in early childhood education

% of population in the same subgroup, Less than 3 years, 2022



Source: [Enrolment rate by age](#)

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Accumulated Economic Dependency of Women

Gender pay gap by educational level, 2023 (%)

Educational level	Gender pay gap	
	Earnings	Wages-salaries
Primary school and below	14,9	13,2
Primary education and secondary school	15,8	14,1
High school	20,0	16,7
Higher education	17,9	17,4

TurkStat, Women in Statistics, 2024
Source: TurkStat, Structure of Earnings Statistics, 2023

Gender Gap in Access to Income and Pension Income

Ages 65+	No income(%)	Earning income(%)	All	
Women	32	68	100	
Men	3	97	100	

Ages 65+	Widow/orphan Profit income			
	Pension Income(%)	pension	(%)	Wage income (%)
Proportions among women	46,5	59,5	1,7	3,2
Proportions among men	97,3	2,4	12	5,4

Özar and Memiş, 2024 based on TÜİK, SILC, 2023.

Ample Research on the Impact on Care Providers

- Labor market outcomes: Labor Force Participation , Employment Hours, Employment Conditions, Employment Prospects (current and in the future), Wages

(See Carmichael and Charles, 1998 and 2003; Williams, 2004; Lilly, Laporte and Coyte, 2007; Heitmueller and Inglis, 2007; Bolin, Lindgren and Lundborg, 2008; Hammer and Neal, 2008; De Rigne and Ferrante, 2012; Hohmeyer and Kopf, 2020; Heger and Korfhage, 2020 as examples of empirical studies on labor market related impacts).

- Physical and psychological health-related costs

(See Galicchio et al., 2002; Pinquart and Sörensen, 2006; Heger, 2014; Di Novi, Jacobs and Migheli, 2015; Brenna, 2020,...)

- Differences in care regimes matter not only for the costs born by caregivers but also for care receivers.

(See Spieß and Schneider, 2003; Heger, 2014; Di Novi, Jacobs, and Migheli, 2015; Pireto and Jimenez-Martin, 2015; Heger and Korfhage, 2020; as examples of comparative studies reflecting on differences in outcomes of various care regimes)

- Studies on informal elderly care in Türkiye

- the caregiver characteristics, caregiving activities, perceived care burden, well-being, and life quality of the caregiver (primarily based on small samples) –health and nursing journals
- Migrant care labor (Toksöz and Ünlütürk-Ulutaş, 2012; Erdoğan and Toksöz, 2013; Akalın, 2014; Akkan and Serim, 2018)
- Cash for care scheme- (Özateş Gelmez, 2016; Atasü-Topçuoğlu, 2021)

Sandwich Generation

- Demographic transformation:
 - living longer + postponement of having children= sandwiched generation
- double care responsibility: children cared for in the household and parents aging needing elderly care.
- Sandwich Caregivers -Women in the Middle (Brody et.al. 1981) caught in between:
 - ✓ Clashing roles as mother and daughter-having to respond different types of care needs (Mitchell, 2014)
 - ✓ Paid work/employment and sandwiched care work
 - ✓ Identity Roles- as independent- economically empowered women- women as the care provider according to traditional gender division of labour
- more recently- Gender Equality Values vs. Rising Conservatism and discourse and policy choices- Familialism ?
- “Family” serving for closing the gaps and insecurities due to undelivering labour markets and welfare regimes

Growing literature on impact of care providing on sandwiched caregivers’ labour market participation, employment conditions, health and well-being,- identifying differences between care regimes, socio-economic differences. (Some recent examples are: Grundy and Henretta, 2006; Do, Cohen and Brown, 2014; Guiterrez, Mason and Zaghani, 2021; Lei et al, 2023 and Yamashita and Soma, 2025 ...)

And also on grand-mature sandwich generation (Silverstein et al., 2020; Xu, 2024)

SANDWICH GENERATION WOMEN-DESCRIPTIVEs

❖ 30-49 age group:

- longest hours of (paid and unpaid) work.
- 76% on unpaid work
- Personal time and time for leisure is lower compared to other age groups.
- Prevalence of not participating in the LFP due caregiving (for children) reasons is highest
- Part-time work is nearly double of other age groups

❖ Sandwiched 30-49:

- 68% out of the labor force- (age groups av. is 61%)
- 39% employment rate (age groups average is 36)
- 24% part-time employment (age groups average 13%)
- Constant feeling of time pressure higher for the sandwiched
- Health status is relatively worse.

DATA INFORMATION

- TUS (2014-15):

time use data of 25,109 individuals ages 10+ , 9,073 households.

interviews and daily diaries

two days (one for a weekday and one for a weekend day): daily activities in ten-minute intervals for 24 hours of a day.

*Daily activities are classified according to the Eurostat (2000) activity coding list. We use whole week information.

- SILC (2015):

income and living conditions data for 22, 763 households with 81,048 individuals representative of whole population in Turkey covering 12 NUTS

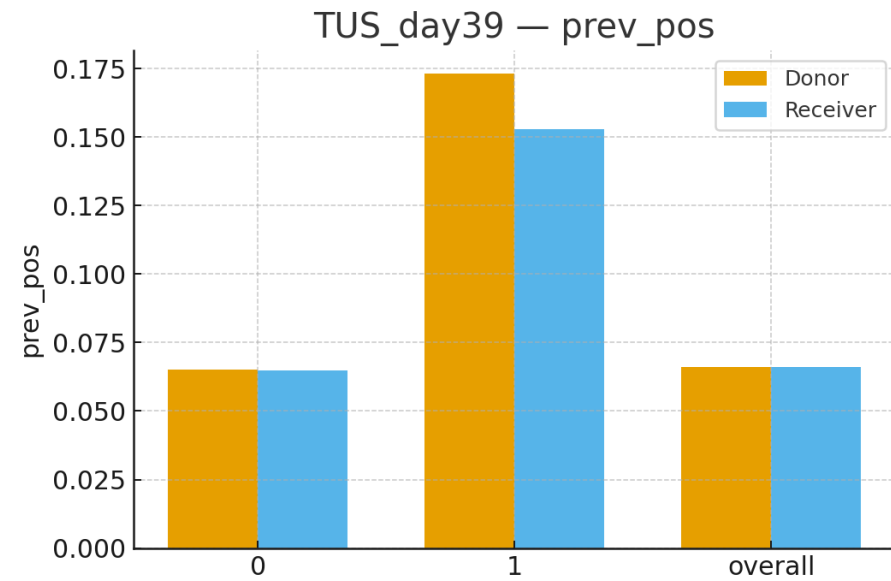
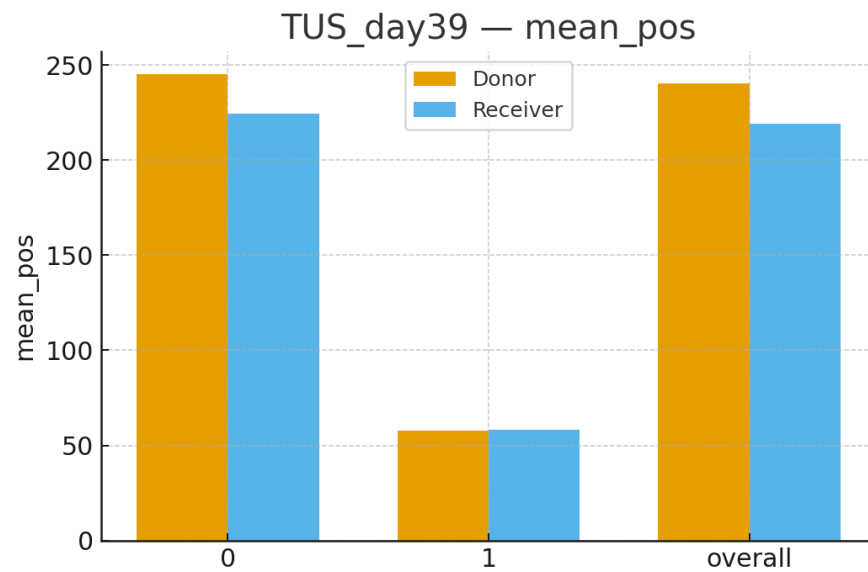
TURKSTAT calculated income poverty rates and other poverty indicators based on SILC database every year.

- Although TUS survey does not allow for an exploration in income pooling, following Zacharias, Masterson, and Memis (2014), Ilkkaracan et. al. (2021) we could be able to identify the impact of elderly care provision on households material deprivation and livelihood based on the nationally representative dataset the Survey of Income and Living Conditions (2015) data set.

Empirical ANALYSIS

- The statistical matching procedure employed:
- using TUS 2015 with SILC 2015
- - transfer information on elderly care provision from the donor (ZKA) to the receiver (SILC) dataset followed a two-part framework.
- (i) the probability of engaging in elderly care:
 - including sex, age category, education, employment status, household composition (presence of 65+ members, number of adults/kids), and household poverty status
- (ii) the extent or intensity of such care among those who provide it.
 - conditional on predicted/observed participation, the intensity of care (duration of hours) using PMM
 - capturing both the extensive and intensive margin providing a synthetic dataset suitable for analysis

Quality Checks



EMPIRICAL SPECIFICATION FOR TESTING HHs' RESOURCE Pooling

- Indirectly explore whether caring for elderly makes a significant difference in households' material deprivation status, or on ease of livelihoods controlling for other standard individual and household variables. (logit/probit estimation for binary variables)

$$\bullet Y_i = \theta_i C_i + \mu_i H_i + \zeta_i I_i + \varepsilon_i \quad (1)$$

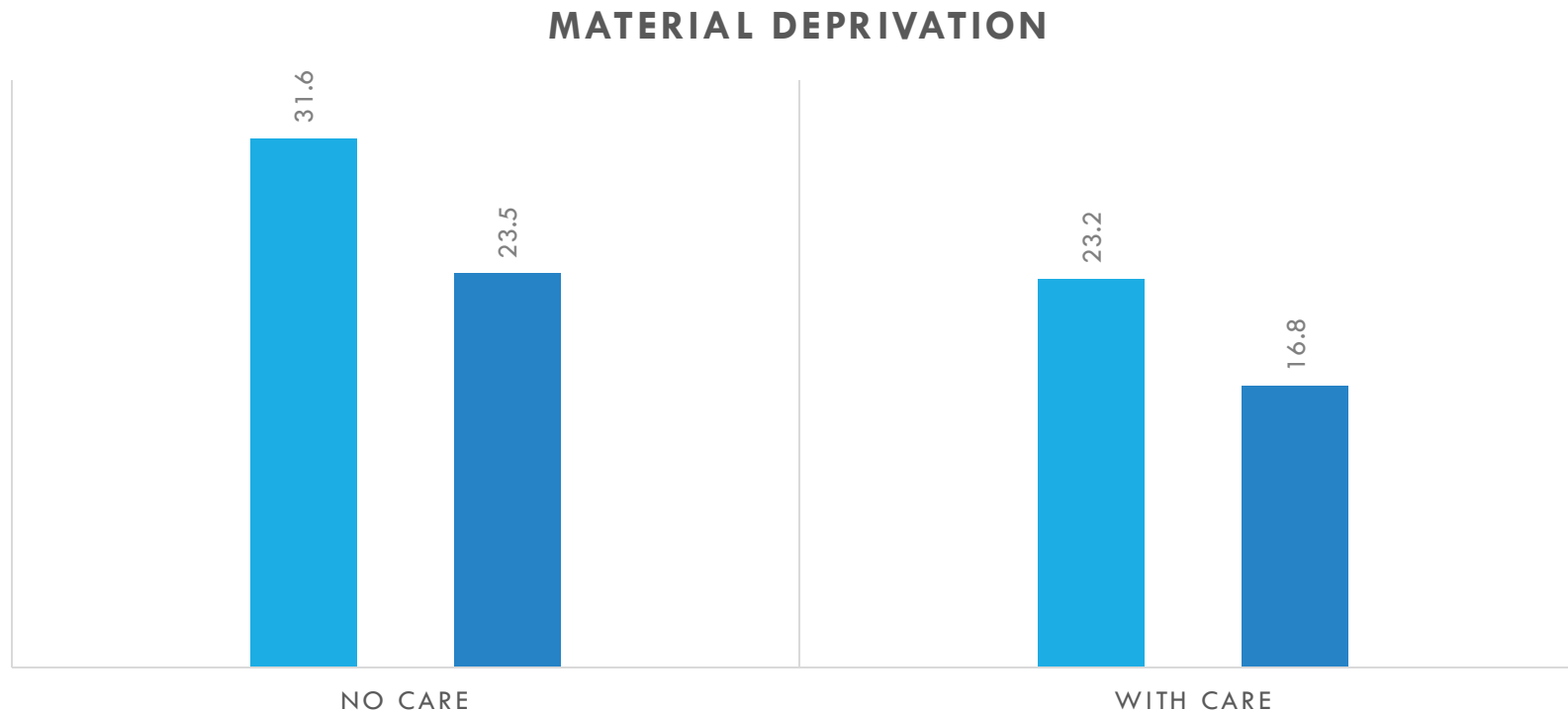
- (1) C_i presents whether the respondent participate in elderly care (=1) or (=0).
- Further, μ_i and θ_i presents the parameters for I_i individual and H_i household level. ε_i stands for the error term.
- Control variables:
 - hh equivalence income, hhsize, number of adults, number of kids, elderly's age in hh, region, hh_assistance in cash, hh. assistance in kind, family type, age of youngest child, number of earners within the household.
- Individual: sex, marital status, education, age, whether employed in the market (=1) or (=0).

Material deprivation

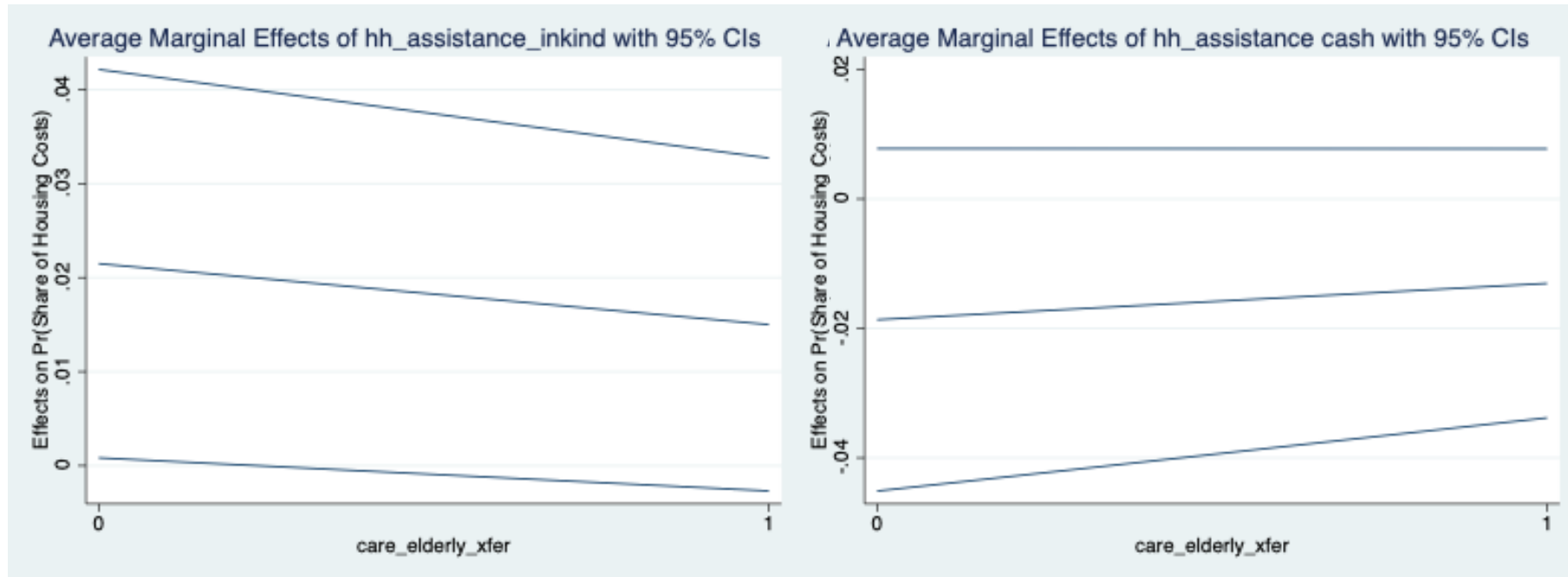
Defined as the proportion of people facing serious financial hardship, material deprivation is the percentage of the population living in households that cannot afford at least 4 of the 9 specified items for economic reasons.

1. Unexpected expenses
2. A week's vacation away from home (for all family members)
3. Payment difficulties (mortgage, rent, electricity, water, natural gas bills, installments/debts)
4. A meal containing meat, poultry, or fish every other day (equivalent meal for vegetarians)
5. Heating needs of the home
6. Washing machine
7. Color television
8. Telephone (landline or mobile)
9. Car

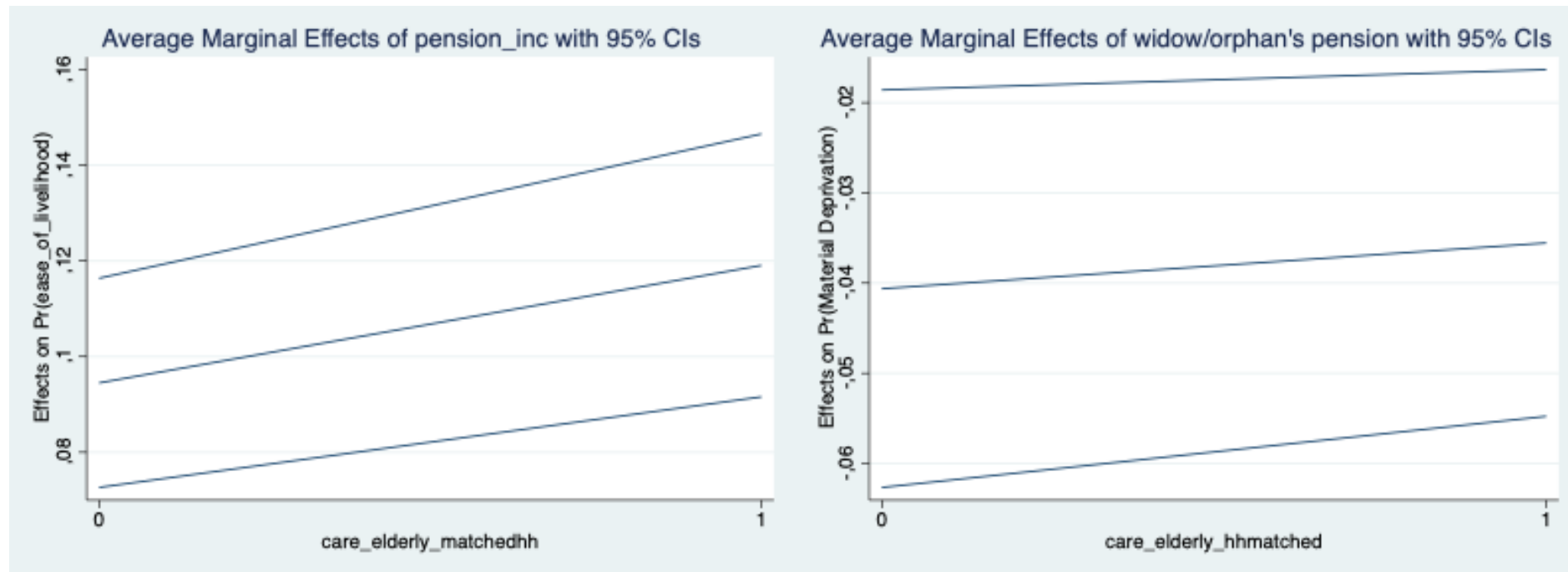
WHETHER ELDERLY CARE CHANGES EMPLOYMENT IMPACT ON MATERIAL DEPRIVATION (SANDWICHED GENERATION)



TESTING HHS.' POOLING OF INCOME RESOURCES



TESTING HHS.' POOLING OF INCOME RESOURCES



FINDINGS

- ❖ If the hh. receives hh_assistance in cash/kind where elderly care==1, the share of housing costs in total expenditures declines/rises.
- ❖ If the hh. receives pension income where elderly care==1, ease of livelihood is significantly and positively affected, material deprivation declines.

Lacking the alternatives such as institutional services, the interdependency and reciprocity results in transfer of caring labor among women of different generations.

Pooling of time and income resources as coping strategies.

Sandwich Generation Care Provider Women and Care Receiver Elderly Women-Care Transfer Across Generations

RESULTS (İzdeş and Memiş, 2022):

- ❖ Sandwiched women's LFP is lower, and they work fewer hours.
 - ❖ For younger cohorts, elderly care does not negatively affect LFP support from the cared elderly.
 - ❖ If the elderly cared for is between 65-80 years old, the LFP of the sandwiched woman is positively affected.
 - ❖ If the hh. Receiving pension income, the LFP of the sandwiched woman is positively affected.
 - ❖ On the other hand, if the intensity of the care need is high and the elderly are older than 80, the LFP of the sandwiched woman is negatively affected.
- ! Time pooling and care transfer across generations of women cannot be sustained as the need for care of the elderly (aged 80+) intensifies