

Left behind in transition?

The well-being of older people in the Central
Asian Republics of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan

Jane Falkingham, Angela Baschieri,
Maria Evandrou, and Gail Grant
Centre for Research on Ageing

Overview

- Study context
- Research aims
- Methods & data
- Preliminary results
 - Quantitative
 - Qualitative
- Discussion points



Study Context

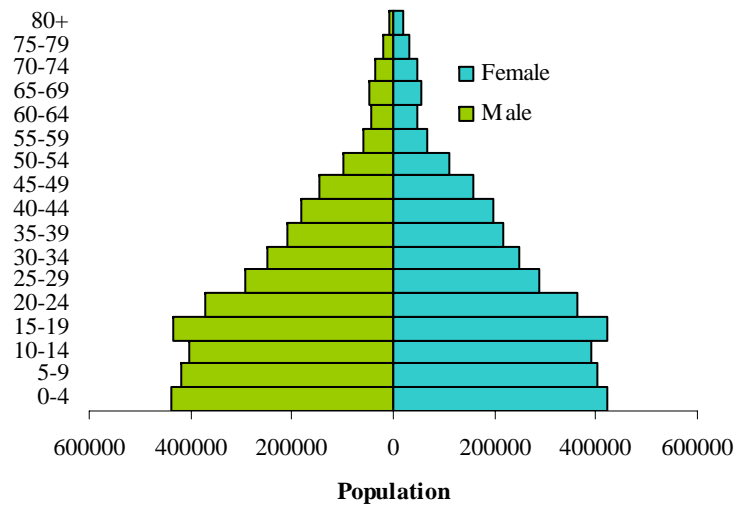
THE CAUCASUS AND CENTRAL ASIA



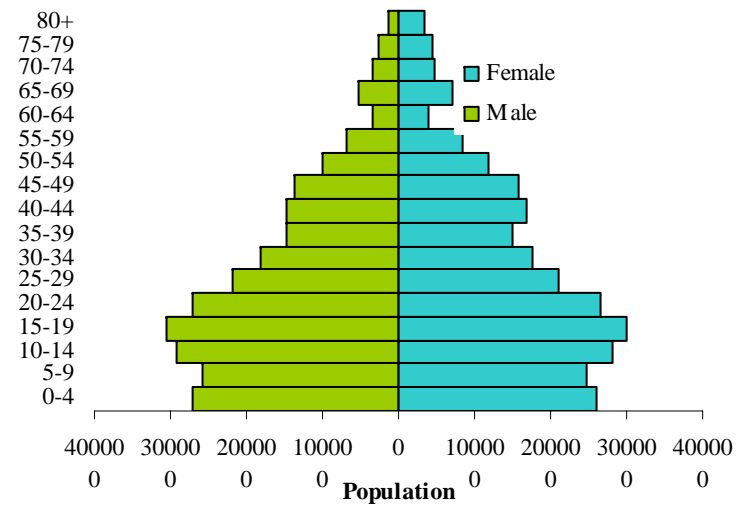
802996A1 (C00678) 7-03

Demography

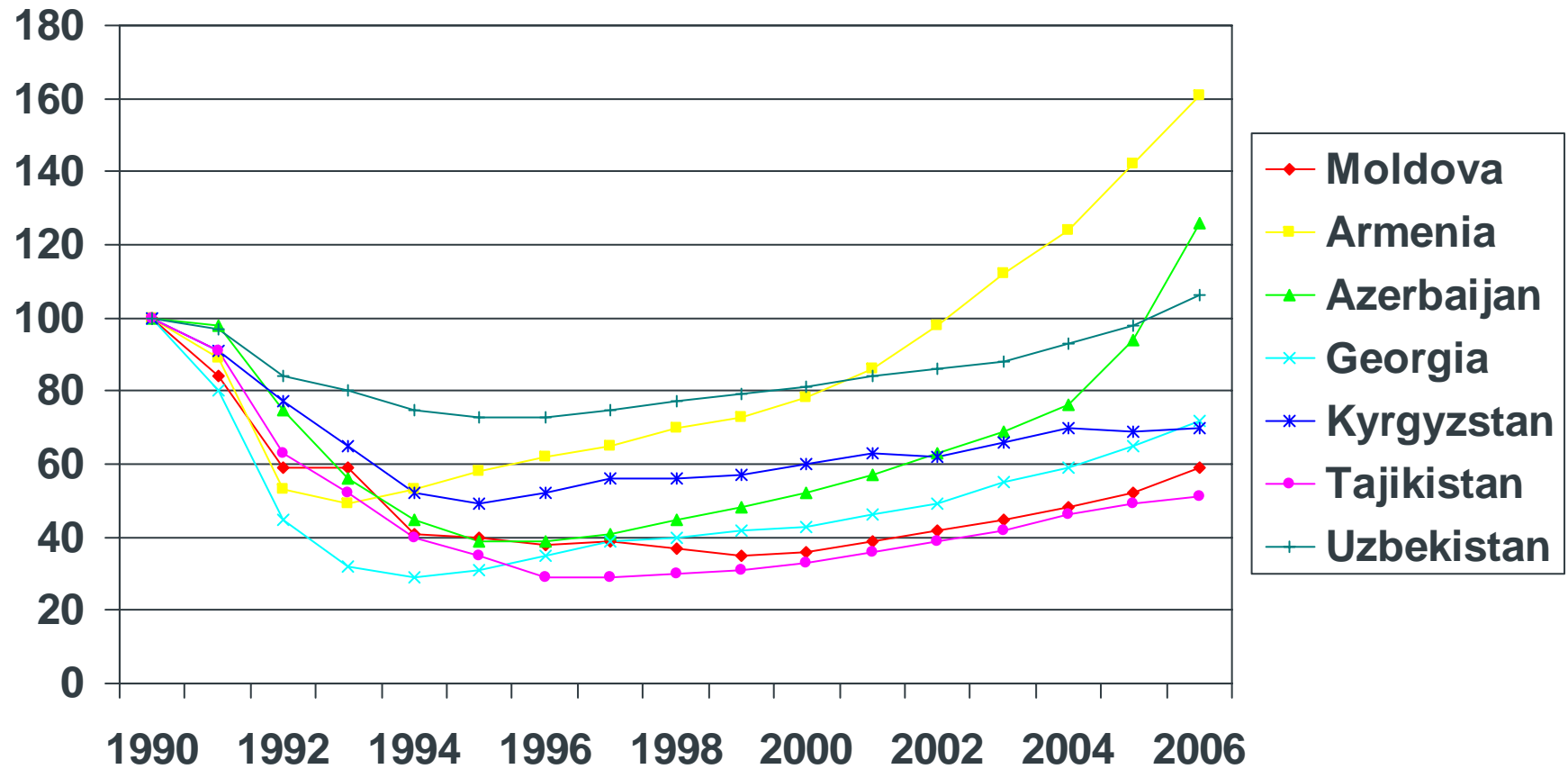
Tajikistan/2006



Kyrgyzstan/2006



Trend in real GDP per capita (constant 2000 US\$ PPP) across the CIS-7, 1991=100



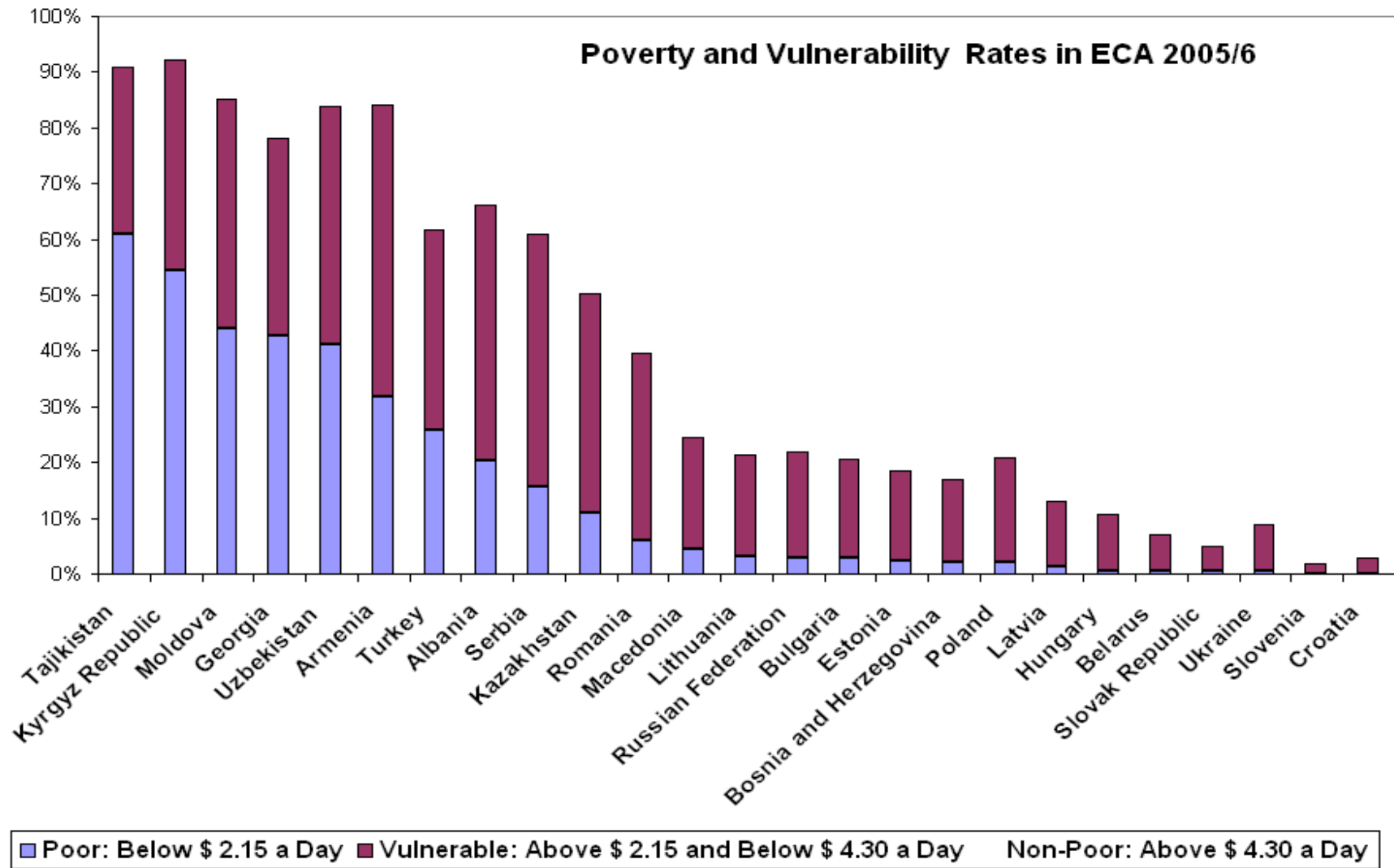
Context

- Severe economic reversal

(compounded by civil war in Tajikistan 1992-1997)

- Collapse of social safety nets
- Increasing inequality and high rates of poverty



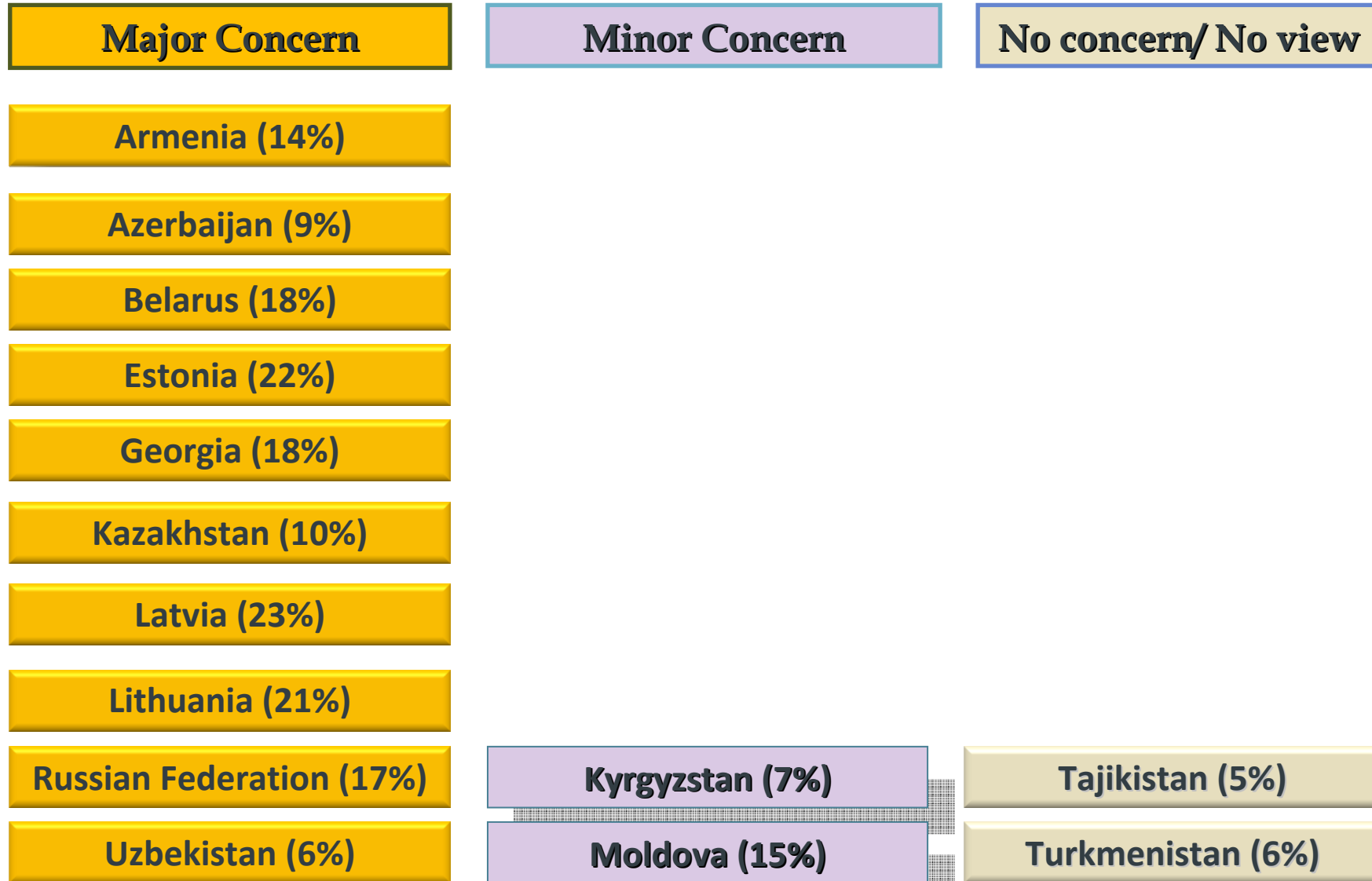


Source: World Bank 2007

Left behind in transition? Older people in Central Asia

- **Economically ?**
 - ↓ Pensions
 - Privatisation
 - ↑ Prices
- **Psychologically?**
 - Changing social mores
- **Physically?**
 - Migration
 - Literally left behind as younger people leave
- **By policy makers?**

Policy context: Government Views on Ageing of The Population: Level of Concern (2007)



In the brackets - proportion of 60+ population

Research aims, methods and data

Research questions

- What are the living conditions of older people in the countries of the CIS-7?
- Are older people more or less likely to be at risk of being poor?
- What is the role of the extended family in providing economic and social support to older people? What is the role of remittances?
- What is the role of older people in providing support within the extended family, particularly to children in their role as grandparents?
- How have social networks been affected by the extensive migration that has taken place in the region?
- What other coping strategies have older people adopted?
- What are the views and priorities of older people themselves? How can their concerns be best taken into account by policy makers and civil society?

Methods & data

- Mixed method approach
- Quantitative
 - Secondary analysis of Living Standard Measurement Surveys (or Household Budget Surveys)
- Qualitative
 - Focus groups
 - In-depth interviews
- Content analysis of policy documents, especially PSRPs

Preliminary findings

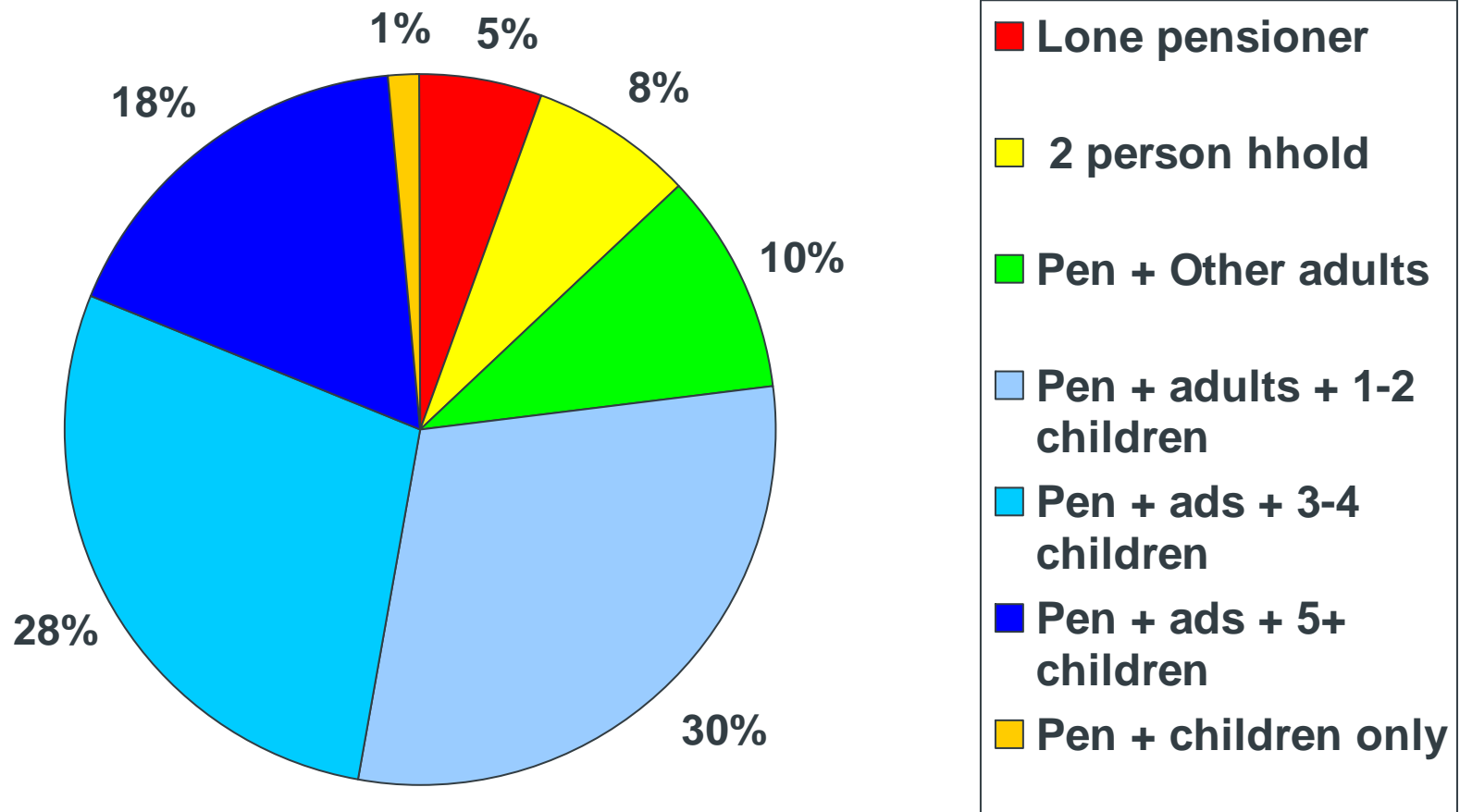
a) quantitative analysis

Tajikistan

Tajikistan Living Standards Survey 2003

- 26,141 individuals living in 4,156 households
- 766 men aged 60+ and 1,002 women aged 55+
- Individual: demographic characteristics (inc migration), education, health, employment (inc wages)
- Household: dwelling conditions, other sources of income, expenditure, transfers, subjective well-being
- Community: infrastructure, availability of services

Household composition of older people, TLSS 2003



Majority of older people live in extended family households
of 3 generations or more

% living under \$2.15 a day by age category, TLSS 2003

	% living in poverty	[95% confidence interval]
Under 15, CHI	66.7	[65.8-67.7]
Women 15 to 55, WAW	61.6	[60.3-62.7]
Men 15 to 60, WAM	60.8	[59.9-62.4]
Women pension age, PEW	58.5	[55.9-64.5]
Men pension age, PEM	60.2	[55.6-61.9]
TOTAL	63.4	[62.8-64.0]

Using conventional 'World Bank' approach to measuring poverty, older people are **less** likely to be poor than younger age groups

% pensioners living under \$2.15 a day by household type, TLSS 2003

	<i>% living in poverty</i>	<i>Relative risk of poverty</i>	<i>CI</i>
Lone pensioner	34.2	0.54	[24.4-44.0]
Two person, pensioner hhold	33.8	0.53	[23.6-44.1]
Pensioner + working age adult	30.1	0.47	[16.3-43.9]
Pensioner + 2 or more WAA	44.9	0.71	[37.2-52.6]
Pensioner + WAA + 1-2 children	57.9	0.91	[53.6-62.4]
Pensioner + WAA + 3-4 children	67.7	1.07	[63.4-72.1]
Pensioner + WAA + 5+ children	77.7	1.23	[72.8-82.7]
Pensioner + children	27.5	0.43	[9.0-46.0]
<i>All individual (whole pop)</i>	<i>63.4</i>	<i>1.00</i>	<i>[62.8-64.0]</i>

Pensioners living alone are much **less** likely to be poor than those living in extended households

Measuring poverty – taking differences in household size & composition into account

- **Per capita**

- Assumes all resources are pooled and shared equally in the household
- Assumes no economies of scale or differences in ‘need’ across groups
- Large household are poorer than small households

- **Adult equivalent income / expenditure**

Adjusted expenditure = Total expenditure / [Household size ^A]

- A = 1 gives per capita measure, no economies of scale
- New OECD scale: A= 0.5, very strong economies of scale

WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES IT MAKE?

% pensioners living in 'extreme' poverty by household type using alternative equivalence scales

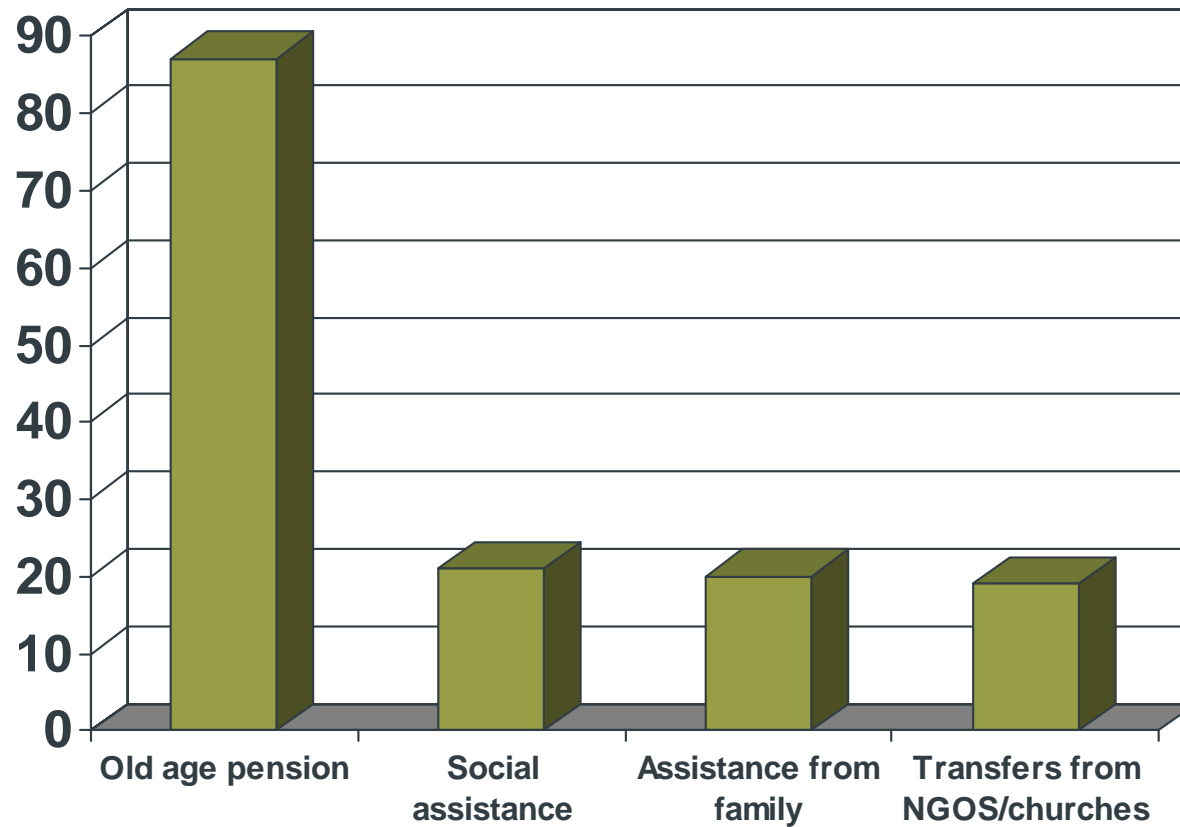
	$\theta=1$	$\theta=0.9$	$\theta=0.8$	$\theta=0.7$	$\theta=0.6$	$\theta=0.5$	$\theta=0.4$	$\theta=0.3$	$\theta=0.2$	$\theta=0.1$	$\theta=0.0$
Lone pensioner	9.5	16.1	23.9	33.0	38.4	45.8	58.4	67.4	77.1	81.2	89.9
Two person, pensioner hhold	2.6	7.1	10.4	13.0	20.1	27.2	29.9	38.9	44.4	50.3	57.5
Pensioner + working age adult	16.6	18.5	24.3	24.3	29.5	30.1	30.1	37.9	47.9	52.3	56.8
Pensioner + 2 or more WAA	11.5	11.5	13.4	14.8	14.4	14.5	18.7	19.7	19.7	22.6	23.3
Pensioner + WAA + 1-2 children	14.7	14.6	13.9	14.7	15.8	15.1	16.2	16.5	15.7	15.7	16.3
Pensioner + WAA + 3-4 children	21.1	20.3	19.5	17.5	16.8	15.6	14.4	12.5	9.4	7.4	6.5
Pensioner + WAA + 5+ children	32.0	30.0	26.2	22.4	17.2	15.7	10.0	7.2	5.9	5.2	4.8
Pensioner + children	18.3	18.3	18.3	18.3	18.3	18.3	18.3	18.3	22.9	32.1	32.1
% in poorest quintile	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20
Average hh_size											
Poor	8.79	8.31	7.78	7.10	6.40	6.01	5.31	4.79	4.28	3.95	3.65
Non-Poor	6.93	7.03	7.16	7.31	7.46	7.55	7.71	7.84	7.94	8.05	8.10

The choice of equivalence scale can alter the profile of poverty significantly!

% of older people living in households with arrears by household type

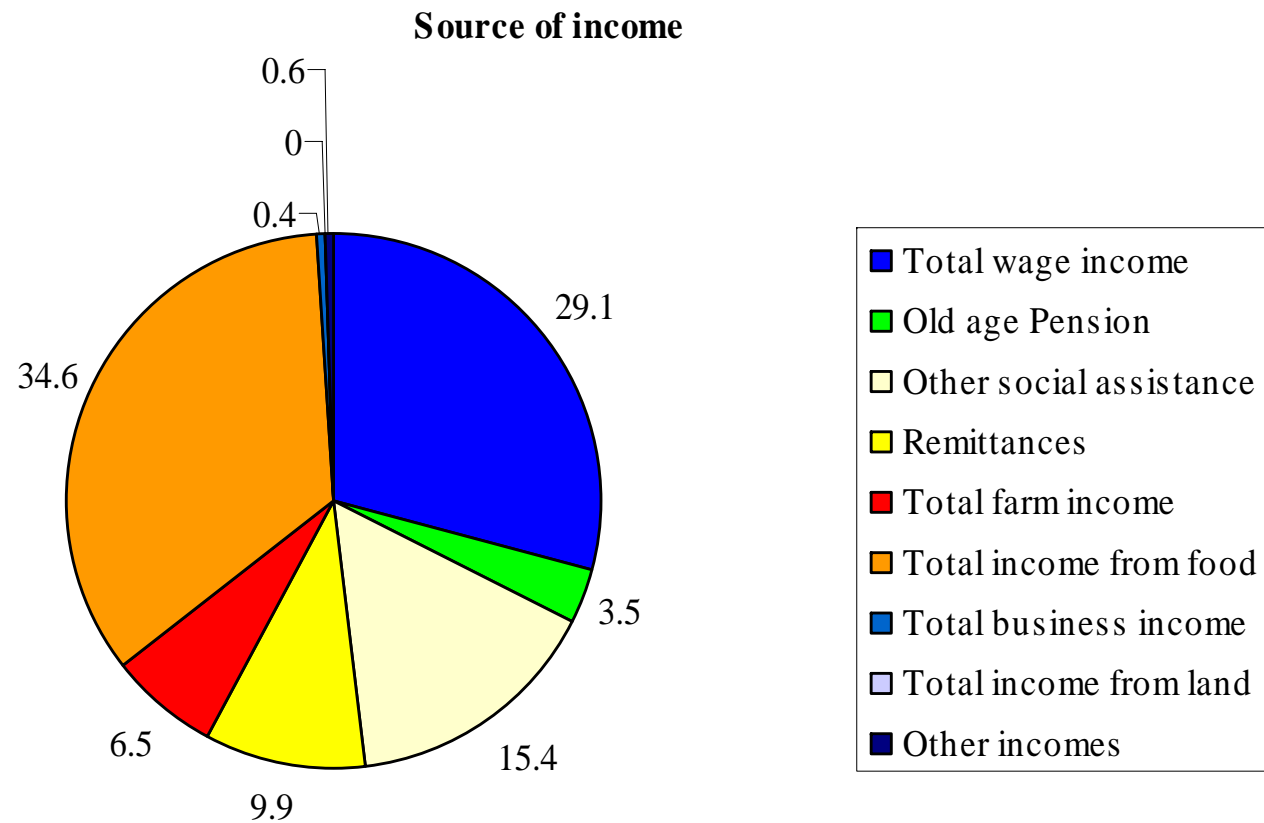
	<i>Arrears in water bill</i>	<i>Arrears in electricity bill</i>
Lone pensioner	14.8	22.3
Two person, pensioner household	10.6	17.1
Pensioner + working age adult	11.3	23.0
Pensioner + 2 or more WAA	4.0	21.4
Pensioner + WAA + 1-2 children	6.0	18.5
Pensioner + WAA + 3-4 children	3.4	13.7
Pensioner + WAA + 5+ children	2.7	10.9
Pensioner + children	0	20.8
National	5.3	16.3

% of pensioners living in households receiving support from various sources TLSS 2003



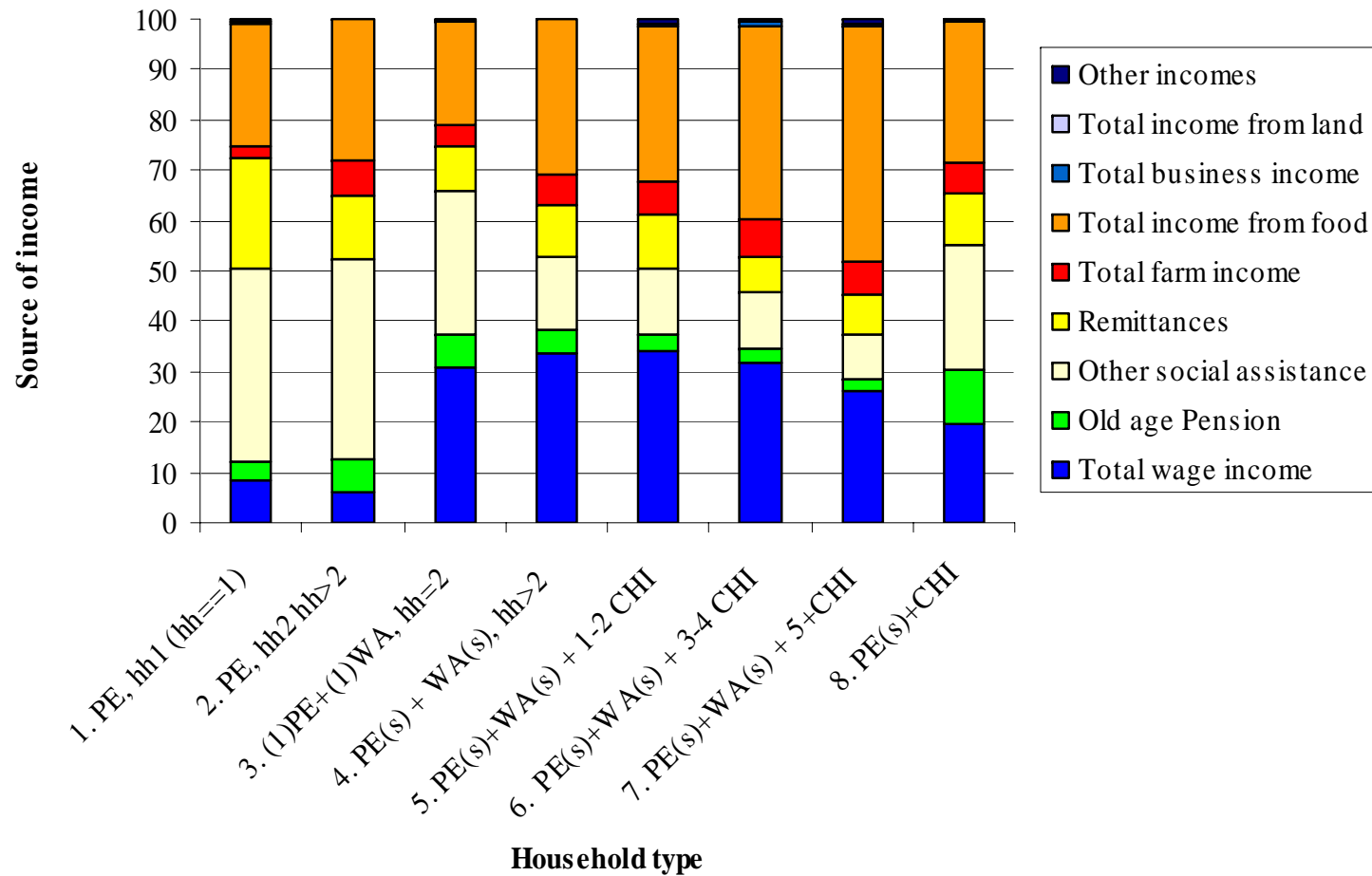
Over four-fifths of old people receive pension; less than one fifth receive remittances

Sources of household income, all pensioners, TLSS 2003



BUT Pensions make up only a small proportion of household income of all households with pensioners

Sources of household income by household type, all pensioners, TLSS 2007



Preliminary findings
b) qualitative analysis
Kyrgyzstan

The Qualitative Approach

- Focus groups
- In depth interviews
- 3 locations in each country
- Sampling to cover gender, ethnicity
- All participants of pensionnable age

The Basics? Food, water, shelter and warmth

- *I wish we could have bread and water. That is it. What else I may need?*
- *Heat .. But gas is very expensive. I live in a house and it's just so cold in winters, it's unbearable. My pension isn't enough to pay for gas to heat the house. In the winter time, the temperature in my house is barely +11 C. (Russian woman, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan)*
- *It was so cold wanted to hang myself this winter... I don't know if it's going to be the same next year (almost crying). (Russian woman, Kyzul-Kia, Kyrgyzstan)*
- *In our situation it's a choice from among three, either we eat, or we heat, or we take pills. Our pensions do not allow us to spend as much as necessary on all these three things. (Russian woman, age 60, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan)*

The role of the extended family

- *Kyrgyz mentality is to depend on your children when you are old. We live just thanks to our children. (Kyrgyz woman, Bishkek)*
- *We are like parasites who live at someone else's expense. We live at the expense of our children. Pensioners became parasites, that's all I can say. (Kyrgyz woman, Bishkek)*
- *I would like to say this. To be frank, our old men and women, especially Russians dig in trash cans every morning, if you observe. Why is it so? Because not all the children help their parents. (Kyrgyz woman, Bishkek)*
- *I also brought up 2 of my nephews because their mother died in the mining. But now they left and don't keep in touch with me. They obviously don't need their aunt anymore. That's it. (Russian woman, Kyzul Kia)*

Two way flows, older people *providing* support

... and there're 5 of us living together, our daughter in-law with her 2 kids lives with us. She doesn't work – she looks after her little daughter. My son passed away last April, and only after his death my daughter-in-law has given birth to a daughter. Where would we send the baby? So, I and my husband take care of 2 grandkids along with the daughter-in-law. (Russian woman, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan)

What do you mean what I'm busy with! I've got 3 grandchildren, who need to be fed in the mornings, then they have to be sent to school, later they need to have lunch, their home works need to be done. ... I also have to pay attention to my husband when he comes tired after picking the bottles. There's a garden where I have to plough things, there are clothes that I have to wash, there are worn out clothes of kids that I have to darn. (Russian woman, age 60, Bishkek)

Coping strategies

Remittances

Everyone waits for money from Russia to pay back on bills. (Kyrgyz woman, Dzhanki Pahta)

Foraging

Our banya used to be heated with gas, but since it became enormously expensive to pay for gas, we started heating it on wood. So, my husband isn't a lazy one, he takes his cart and leaves in the morning; he picks a bottle here, some dry branch there; later when he comes home he saws a branch into pieces and that's how we manage to collect some wood. (Russian woman, Bishkek)

Cutting back

We don't eat meat, we don't eat cheese, no cottage cheese and other dairy products – I, personally have forgotten the taste of these products. (Russian woman, Bishkek)

Coping strategies

Cutting back

Winters are difficult, especially this one was even harder as gas prices went higher. What can we do? Coal isn't going to be any cheaper for us. For pensioners coal isn't even an option. Now, with the gas heating we can cope. But we only heat up our house twice a week.

'Growing your own'

My family lives off of the property left from my parents-in-law. They left us their house and some land in the village. We cultivate some vegetables there and keep livestock. My husband's younger brother takes care of the household there. We help them physically, and little by little we share the harvest, share meat. Our cow and other livestock is in the hands of my brother-in-law; they benefit by consuming the milk, using the wool. I provide the family of my brother-in-law by sewing them clothes. In return, they look after our cattle, water our fields. It's good that the village is close, we can get there by marshrutka. (Kyrgyz woman, Bishkek)

'Becoming a capitalist'

I have a flat on Moscovskaya/ Sovetskaya which I give for rent for 230 dollars. I, myself, moved to the village (Kyrgyz woman, Bishkek)

Discussion points

- Older people and their visibility within public policy
- Differences within the pensioners population
- The role of the public safety net v private transfers
- The lived experience of pensioners matters