

# 3

## Queer ageing in Austria – and the drag of history

*Karin Schönpflug*

### Introduction

Despite tremendous changes in LGBTIQ rights in Austria over the last 15 years (with same-sex marriage established in 2019), there has been stagnation in public and institutional realms. The European Fundamental Rights Agency, in a 2023 survey drawing on more than 100,000 responses from across 30 countries, found that while LGBTIQ persons in Austria are living more openly than the European average, feelings of discrimination at work or while looking for work, being bullied at school, and experiences of being harassed or attacked in public are above the average, while reports of incidents to the police (as part of institutional trust) are below the average (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2024). Such findings of perpetual experiences of discrimination and harassment across generations of LGBTIQs are confirmed by a decennial study for the city of Vienna (Schönpflug et al., 2025). Another impediment is the excruciatingly slow and subdued processes of rehabilitation, recompensation, and commemoration for the now old or already perished individuals persecuted in Austria as LGBTIQ by national law and under the Nazi regime. These shortcomings resonate as uncanny sensations for queer people in Vienna of all ages up to this day.

Given this context, the Vienna Social Funds (responsible for social service provision) has become aware of the needs for old age care for the ageing LGBTIQ community at a policy level. The city of Vienna has opened one municipal community care apartment for six residents in 2025 (Volkshilfe Wien, 2024). This sparked a debate in the district council on whether queer senior housing is a ‘sign of privilege’ and ‘special wants’; ‘withdrawing scarce resources from families’ and more deserving heterosexual ‘old people’. On the other side of the debate were statements highlighting the need for care for those who ‘grew up at a time when starting a family as same-sex couples was not only unthinkable but legally prohibited, denying the opportunity for a fulfilling, secure life’ (ggg.at, 2024, author’s translation). The planning of the housing project was informed by an a priori needs assessment, revealing different requirements and priorities among LGBTIQ seniors, including connection and visibility. This chapter

Karin Schönpflug - 9781035337095

Downloaded from <https://www.elgaronline.com/> at 06/17/2026 01:43:42PM  
via Open Access. This is an open access work distributed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International  
(<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>) license.  
<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>

extends the results of the practical study and addresses the central question: which factors shape older LGBTIQ individuals' views on old age communal living in Vienna most?

## Methods and theoretical framework

The empirical data in this chapter stems from the needs assessment study for Vienna's Social Fund (Schönplugg & Eberhardt, 2021). It explored demand for old age community housing in Vienna, investigating expectations, foreseeable adversities, and desires for queer communal living arrangements in retirement and (very) old age. Thirteen senior LGBTIQ individuals aged 59–85 and seven experts on LGBTIQ ageing were interviewed combining semi-structured and narrative styles.<sup>1</sup> The data was categorized inductively into wants and fears in old age living, requirements for accommodation and staff, and specific needs of the L-G-B-T-I-Q subgroups, with different cohorts and social identities intersectionally considered for the analysis. Unexpectedly, the interviews foremost revealed a pronounced desire for intergenerational connections, which provided the critical impetus for this chapter's exploration.

In the study, the qualitative findings are linked with Austria's historical context (see QWIEN, 2024) and, in this chapter, connected with international research in critical gerontology. Of particular relevance is the discourse of queer ageing, which challenges heteronormative assumptions about later life (Leontowitsch et al., 2024), enables a queer interpretation of life-course theory (as found in Rosenfeld & Ramirez-Valles, 2024), and builds on ideas of queer temporality (Halberstam, 2005; Muñoz, 2009). While there is a focus on differences in the cohorts, there are also important linkages between LGBTIQ persons of all ages – connections that do not similarly affect those living in chrononormative settings.

Distinguishing groups that experience institutionalized disadvantages from those that do not, Dana Rosenfeld and Jesus Ramirez-Valles apply life-course theory in their study of gay men, viewing later life as the product of historically grounded interchanges between individuals' lives, social change, and structural contexts. Ageing and later life can be seen as affected by cumulative effects of interruptions or derailing of typical life trajectories over time, thereby anchoring adverse socio-economic effects (economic, health, quality of life, for example) in historical time and linking concrete later-life circumstances with earlier life events (Rosenfeld & Ramirez-Valles, 2024: 2). The cohort approach focuses on groups entering a system or context at the same time, allowing for the analysis of 'old people' not as a homogenous group, but as 'age cohorts moving through historical time, each cohort with its distinct life experiences shaped by the circumstances encountered earlier in life' (Hareven in Rosenfeld & Ramirez-Valles, 2024: 2). Next to the grouping in cohorts, the following are also accounted for: effects of social statuses (sex, gender, ethnicity, racially minoritized status, and socio-economic class), normative institutional roles taken up during a life-course (acting as a teenager, spouse, pensioner, for example) (Rosenfeld & Ramirez-Valles, 2024: 2), and events fixed to roles in queer time outside of a chrononormative setting (such

as coming-out, transitioning, stages in serial monogamy). Rosenfeld's and Ramirez-Valles's considerations are adapted to reflect periods of time and instances relevant for the ageing LGBTIQ population in Vienna to conceptualize their needs today and in the decades to come. Queer ageing per se is rarely discussed in Austria, contrary to Germany (Arnolds, 2019), and old age care for LGBTIQ seniors is not on the agenda of queer social movements.

Linkages between queer generations are discussed in different geographical settings and for different subgroups. For Canada, May Chazan and Melissa Baldwin (2019) criticize the literature on queer ageing for frequently portraying LGBTIQ later life as isolated and assuming a generational divide within queer communities – often without adequately reflecting the lived realities, perspectives, or practices of LGBTIQ individuals. Based on interviews with LGBTIQ people of varying ages, they challenge simplistic conceptions of successful ageing, generativity, and intergenerationality. They highlight significant commonalities that counter the assumption of generational divides, such as overcoming shame and cis-heteronormative expectations. They challenge traditional concepts of generativity tied to hetero-reproductive relationships, emphasizing a shared sense of responsibility toward future generations and critiquing traditional notions of intergenerational exchange as one-directional 'passing down' of knowledge. Instead, they emphasize mutual practices of learning, advocacy, and care across generations (Chazan & Baldwin, 2019: 75–6).

In the German context, Tarek Shukrallah works with narratives describing cohort interlinkages in Berlin's queer Black and People of Color (BPOC) community and they highlight continuities in activism and building intergenerational bridges. They question where, when, and how histories are remembered, and emphasize that social struggles, both in their concrete and theoretical dimensions, are situated within a historical context. They also archive the successful and ongoing struggles of queers of color as 'elders', providing testimony and inspiration for current and future generations (Shukrallah, 2024). In Vienna, great efforts have been made to bridge cohort gaps in the community, for instance in the discursive project by Viktoria Eberhardt and Brigitte Temel (2023–2024) that invites younger activists to interact with their predecessors.

## Findings

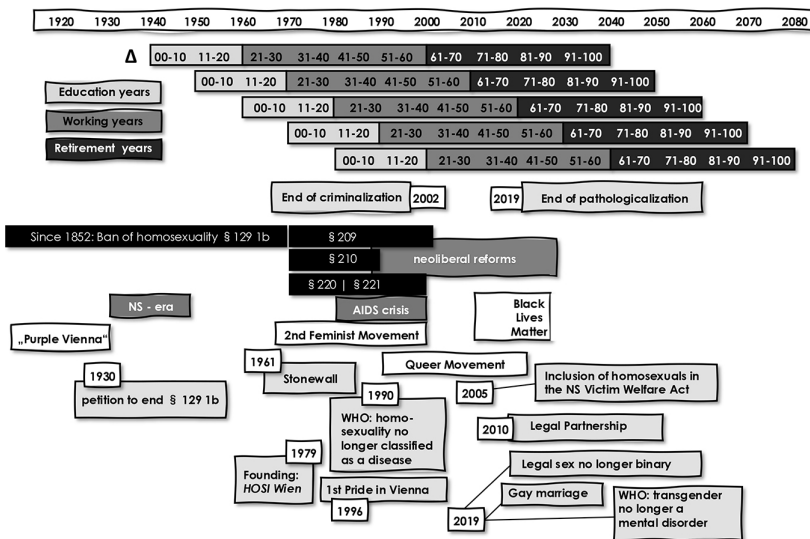
The interviews show how factors that influence older LGBTIQ individuals' views on community housing stem from cohort differences over the life-course, manifesting as aggregated economic and social effects of suppression, discrimination, and silencing. They are represented graphically in a timeline that helps to locate different LGBTIQ cohorts relative to significant lifetime events. Other factors influencing identity formation are socio-economic status, personal preferences, decisions, and experiences. Combined, they form four analytical types of older LGBTIQ individuals with different outlooks on communal old age housing; they are derived from the empirical data and depicted in a four-quadrant matrix chart. Finally, rapid legal changes juxtaposed

with persistent rigid socio-cultural attitudes and a shared desire for successful ageing may be generating a more cohesive LGBTIQ community across all ages.

### A timeline organization of different cohorts

Life-course theory allows grouping the Austrian historical context into largely four phases affecting the specific experiences of different cohorts: 1. those who lived before the end of full criminalization of homosexuality in 1971; 2. those experiencing the AIDS crisis before the release of anti-retroviral treatments in 1996; 3. those who became part of a queer community after 1996 until the granting of civil unions in 2010; and 4. the youngest cohorts who are experiencing the most liberal rights but are facing new challenges owing to ‘a broader anti-feminist and anti-gender landscape that has emerged globally over the past decade in particularized geopolitical manifestations’ (Klapeer, 2025: 237).

Figure 3.1 is used to illustrate how different age groups of LGBTIQ people in Vienna are positioned along a timeline, from birth years 1920 to 1990 (the queer population younger than 35 is not included). For simplicity, each cohort has a potential life span of 100 years. Twenty years in education are followed by 40 working years and up to 40 years of retirement.<sup>2</sup> (The working years not only consider paid work in the labor market but also care work and unpaid activism.) The graphical representation<sup>3</sup> of the cohort view includes adverse and supportive periods of time and significant historical dates for Austria’s LGBTIQ community.



**Source:** Based on Schönplugg and Eberhardt (2021: 10); graphic design supported by Isabella Juen.

**Figure 3.1** Timeline - LGBTIQ age cohorts and the Austrian background

Most notable is the legal context, including the end of all criminalization in 2002, the end of pathologization for LGBs in 1994 and for trans people in 2019, and the still pending end of sex-affirming mutilations for intersex persons. Time periods adverse for LGBTIQ people are the NS era (National Socialism) from 1938–1945 and the AIDS crisis, as well as changes in governmentality (for example, neoliberal reforms). Periods that were affirmative are ‘Purple Vienna’ at the *fin de siècle* (Bei, 1986), the second wave of the women’s movement, the queer movement and the Black Lives Matter movement (starting after the murder of Marcus Omofuma by the police during his deportation). Other relevant dates are important community events, such as the first so-called ‘Pride Parade’ and the founding dates of trans, intersex, queer asylum seeker and rainbow family organizations. The life-course approach suggests that each cohort experiences historical events at different stages of life, which shape their individual perspectives and experiences. One interview poignantly highlights this idea of difference between cohorts:

Young gay men today cannot even comprehend what it means to be ‘enchanted’.<sup>4</sup> And the older generation feels completely misunderstood by the younger one. Young activists are entering the community and have great ideas – things that have been happening for decades. There is hardly any engagement between the young and the old. There should be more opportunities for communication: what was it like back then, for those who are 70 today? (Expert interview. All interviews are author’s translation).

That experience of difference is explained by rapid changes in society: the oldest cohorts in Austria, aged 90 or older, survived WWII and the Nazi era. Even if they had managed to avoid attention by the regime, they would have very likely experienced persecution of someone else they had then known. Homosexuality remained illegal after 1945, and Austria executed the laws rigorously compared to other European countries, arresting men and also women in large numbers and imposing long and severe sentences (QWIEN, 2024). People who were adults during the 1950s and 1960s (today 70 years or older) had to live hidden under a total ban on male and remarkably also female homosexuality and both gay men and lesbian women had to fear up to five years of severe imprisonment should they be arrested – which was reflected on in the interviews:

A housing project is needed. People who are now 70+ have often lived hidden lives, leading double lives. But you won’t reach this target group with 15 rainbow flags (Expert interview).

For those who were young adults in the 1970s (now 60+), the total ban on homosexuality no longer applied as § 129 1b (“*Unzucht wider die Natur*” (“Sodomy or unnatural sexual acts”)) was abolished in 1971. However, replacement laws were introduced: § 209 of the Austrian Penal Code (BKA 2026) established a different age of consent for gay male sex until 2002; § 210 banned (male) same-sex prostitution until 1989 (lifted to slow the spread of AIDS); § 220 prohibited print material with homosexual content as ‘advertising’ until 1997; § 221 the so-called ‘association and assembly ban’ prohibited the formation of organizations promoting homosexuality, especially if likely to ‘cause public outrage’, which was also in place until 1997. Contradictory to the

last two laws, activism flourished by the late 1970s, and the first queer organization was founded (the Homosexual Initiative Vienna) and all but one of the interviewed older people had been or are still activists.<sup>5</sup> The emergence of HIV/AIDS in the 1980s, with the first death in 1983, deeply impacted the community, fostering solidarity and care networks among gays and lesbians, while safer sex material was confiscated by the police as it was claimed to be pornography. Societal discrimination cumulated in same-sex partners having no decision-making power in cases of illness or death, making the legal recognition of same-sex relationships a pressing issue. In Austria, there was a significant ideological overlap between lesbian and gay activists, and organizations sprang up fostering queer activism for justice and solidarity during the AIDS pandemic (Klapeer, 2007). Today HIV is still significant, as one expert says:

An important issue for gay men is HIV, because infection rates are high. People who are 60 or 70 years old and have been survivors for a long time have undergone poor treatment. HIV is easily treatable, but the problem is combining it with other medications. When other diseases are added to the mix, treating HIV becomes a problem, and co-morbidities are more likely in old age. The stigmatization of HIV is also a problem (Expert interview).

In the mid-1990s, there was an increase in the visibility of LGBT individuals, which significantly impacted the generation now aged 50+. Trans people and their demands reached a more prominent status with the first Pride Parade in Vienna in 1996 called the '1st LesbiGay and Transgender Pageant'. Ageing is hard for trans persons not only because of the effects of discrimination and harassment, but:

trans women suffer from the fact that passing becomes more difficult with age. Hormonal changes and the ageing process are often a difficult combination. Some trans women invest 3-4 hours a day in their trans identity; for many, this routine is no longer possible in old age (Expert interview).

In the 2000s, the legal recognition of same-sex relationships and families was achieved outside of parliament through court decisions for those now aged 40+. Austria introduced registered partnerships in 2010, joint adoption in 2015, and same-sex marriage in 2019. Since 2010, LGBTIQ refugees, queer BIPOCs, and migrants have been establishing associations (for example, Queer Base). The Rainbow Family Center opened in 2017, and the Austrian Intersex Organization (VIMÖ) was successful in pushing for Austria to recognize a third legal sex for intersex persons in 2019. In 2026, some gaps remain: there is no ban on genital mutilations and sex-affirming interventions on intersex minors, no law against 'conversion', no provision of legal gender recognition by self-identification. Anti-discrimination laws do not extend fully to all areas and to all LGBTIQ persons (these laws only apply to discrimination in the workplace). Therefore LGBTIQ individuals are not protected from discrimination when accessing goods and services, including elderly care, healthcare, and housing (ILGA World, 2024) – demands referred to as “leveling up” aim to extend protection to these areas.

While the city of Vienna opened a first queer youth center in 2024, not much has yet been done for the ageing LGBTIQ community. A trans man comments on the need for queer retirement housing in Vienna:

I think that would be well received by the community. Ageing is a sensitive topic. I'm 57 now, so you have to think about these things. If there were a larger queer house, with a few community apartments and a café and shared spaces, I would want that. It wouldn't be ghettoization; you can always go outside. I spend so much time in the cis world, as many of us do, so I would think it would be great if it were a small queer world (Senior interview).

### Analytical types of queer seniors

For the needs assessment, four different types of potential clients for old age community housing were established. Differences in attitudes toward communal living are shaped by historical events, socio-economic factors, and personal decisions, experiences, and preferences. A 63-year-old lesbian describes:

[I]f you ask 17 people, you'll likely get about five different priorities [for old age living]. I find it quite difficult, not to say even unprofessional, to claim that lesbians and gay men want this or that because . . . a lot also depends on how a person has lived and then on what is personally preferred. Whether the person has lived openly as lesbian, gay, or trans? Whether they were activists . . . but the primary motivation is really what people can afford (Expert interview).

The personal factors shaping preferences for old age housing are based on having lived openly or closeted, engagement with activism, and personal means, either in the form of monetary wealth or social capital (for example, personal networks with family, chosen family, and friends). Figure 3.2 shows the analytical representation of four types of LGBTIQ seniors who are already retired or reaching retirement age and who may need old age care in the next decades based on specific vulnerabilities:

The categorization follows Fredriksen-Goldsen et al. in their approach to 'explore historical and environmental context as it frames life experiences and adaptation' of LGBTIQ older adults (Fredriksen-Goldsen et al., 2017: 15) and applies life-course theory on cohort memberships' implications for later life, including cumulative disadvantage (Rosenfeld & Ramirez-Valles, 2024), while highlighting diversity among the cohorts. Important time markers are the end dates for criminalization for LGBs (1971), end dates for pathologization for LGBs (1990) and for trans persons (2019), and the ongoing pathologization for intersex people.

Also of relevance is whether and how individuals were partaking in intersecting movements, including the second women's movement of the 1970s (see Traies, 2018), the first queer movement of the 1980s (Siverskog & Bromseth, 2019: 329) and the Black Lives Matter movement of the 2000s in Vienna (Tackie, 2022). AIDS, at least until 1996, affected anyone who was then sexually active (King & Hall, 2023) or allies of those who were. Today's rapid ageing population is coinciding with ongoing reforms and changes that were initiated by neoliberal policies in the later 1980s, and which

		<b>Criminalization and pathologization</b>		
		<i>low</i>	<i>high</i>	
		cohorts from appr. 1955* cis persons endo persons	cohorts until appr. 1955* trans persons (until 2019) intersex persons	
<b>Movements and crises</b>	<i>strengthening effects</i>	Women's movement Queer-movement Black Lives Matter	<b>experience with communal living, activists</b>	<b>out and open, well-networked old</b>
	<i>Weakening</i>	AIDS-crisis neoliberal individualization NS time	<b>distance from community: couples, Rainbow families; traumatized AIDS survivors</b>	<b>distance from community, isolated, hidden, inactive old</b>

**Source:** Based on Schönplug and Eberhardt (2021: 44).

**Figure 3.2** Type-analytical representation

have imposed financial and social burdens for LGBTIQ movements: unpaid internships replaced (queer) activism, Bologna reforms dampened political student movements, increasing housing prices and gentrification erased available spaces, restrictive labor market policies imposed higher workloads, new queer family norms created separated communities of LGBTIQ persons with and without children, the upspring of cyberbullying (Trafford et al., 2024) hampered activism, and pension reforms and an unsustainable care system based on the exploitation of women and migrants necessitated ‘successful ageing’ – which also applies to LGBTIQ seniors (Sandberg & Marshall, 2017). Indicators for successful ageing are social and financial capital, for example a functioning network of friends, and chosen and biological families across generations (Hawthorne et al., 2020), as is direly described by an 83-year-old lesbian:

I have four adult children from my divorced marriage, none of them care much about me, which became clear in the context of my femoral neck fracture. Two of my children are opposed to my lesbian relationship, and only two of my granddaughters visited me in hospital. It is expected that my girlfriend is my natural care giver. She was surprised by the change in our relationship, but she is not mean to me. It would be very helpful to relieve her burden, and my granddaughters are stepping in, which is not a given (Senior interview).

Isolated couples or individuals, those whose life partners may have already passed, or the traumatized AIDS survivors without (financial) plans for old age (Ramirez-Valles, 2016) are even more vulnerable. Activists may be well networked, but unpaid volunteering could have resulted in pension gaps, and changing ideas of activism, communities, and recording of history (Krispenz & Bertrams, 2024) may have induced a loss of belonging for the older generation. However, decades of hiding have also resulted

in a void of role models for younger generations, as a professional gay caregiver (aged 45) states:

We didn't have, or had very few, older people we could go to or talk to. Heterosexuals can go to parents and grandparents; we were left in the air. Experience plays a big role; when you visit an older person, you learn a lot about what they've gone through, and what you can learn from it for your own life. It gives you self-assurance for your own coming-out (Expert interview).

## Successful ageing and cross-generational cohesion

The last segment of this chapter revisits the experiences of LGBTIQ individuals in Austria who are deeply intertwined with the legal developments of the past decades. Only on June 7, 2021 did the Austrian Justice Minister Alma Zadić offer the first official apology to those persecuted from 1945 to 2002, saying that 'the suffering of the older generations cannot be undone' (QWIEN, 2024). Similarly, the improvements for the younger generations are contradicted by the manifestation of the past in the general population, preventing deeper social change:

What is prohibited by criminal law is certainly considered persistently condemned and thus establishes an overarching affirmative position in political and moral discourse . . . The history of 'Unzucht' [sexual misconduct] in Austria since the Enlightenment proves the long-standing and ongoing flourishing of a societal conception of order that is accompanied by a morality regime, which often legally enshrines exclusion to a degree far beyond the legitimate protective function of criminal law and works with norm-setting fears (Benke & Holzleithner in QWIEN, 2024: 4, author's translation).

Bourdieu describes this as a situation 'where habitus falls out of alignment with the field in which it operates, experienced as lag or disconnect amid changing circumstances' (Bourdieu in Graham, 2020: 2). This means that even though civil rights such as same-sex marriage have been established, social condemnation is ongoing. This persistence can be imagined as something that the Austrian LGBTIQ community and queer individuals have been *dragging along* with them, or something that has been *dragging them down*. Therefore, I have termed this phenomenon 'the drag of history', a queer explanation of changing formal settings in Austria juxtaposed with stagnating societal norms.

The drag of history is the so-called 'long silence' until 2005, with five decades of refusing victim status, apologies, and compensations for gay survivors of the NS regime. It also took until 2023 (more than half a century after homosexuality was legalized) for a law to be passed that granted rehabilitation and (very limited) monetary compensation for those convicted between 1945 and 2002. The above-mentioned apology by the minister of justice is an apology by her alone – not by the Austrian government, nor the parliament. This drag of history coincides with an extremely rapid liberation process: legal partnerships have been legal since 2009 – a mere five years after the police stopped surveillance with 'homo registers'. Only ten more years later, joint and

second parent adoption, same-sex marriage, a third option for gender markers, and legal procedures for sex change without gender-affirming surgery were also legalized.

If you were born in 1971, like me, five decades would have completely upturned your citizenship status as a queer person. Yet discriminatory attitudes and harassment in public spaces persist (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2024) and, significantly, there is a lag in queer people's personal and collective ability to process the resulting harm. But queering is resilience, as *drag* is also a strategy of subversion, an avenue for reviving history. Paul Helfritsch (2024), in an art project on Vienna's queer community, says that:

[drag is] . . . a form of bitterness and ridiculousness, patched together . . . with [a] still powerful look at the situation of our time. It causes pain. Pain from wounds in the flesh, in the thinking, in the imagination and in the feeling. And it is this pain and its poison that must be dealt with. It is that which we must understand if we are to learn to work seriously with ridiculousness, to find in ridiculousness seriousness and knowledge – perhaps even our communality (Helfritsch, 2024: 286).

Drag in this case exemplifies a young artist's desire for healing and communality; a desire that queer community across cohorts is expressed for living arrangements for older LGBTIQ individuals. Next to 'queer visibility in old age'<sup>6</sup> the interviews often contained wishes for 'inter-generational' cohabitants and/or contacts. A 72-year-old lesbian states:

[I]t would be really important to [interact with younger women]; otherwise, the sociopolitical and friendly exchange would be missing. It's great to talk with them, go out for a meal, and engage in discussions (Senior interview).

A 59-year-old intersex activist similarly states:

I want to remain integrated into the community, even in old age, and be able to pass on my experience, strength, and creativity. It's about being useful as an older person, playing a role in the lives of younger people (Senior interview).

Recognizing these desires, the interviewed queer caregiver (quoted earlier in this chapter) suggests intergenerational interactions such as visitation days in elderly care housing with young LGBTIQ individuals, which could allow for experience sharing, and discussions of past and present realities and the state of the community for younger people. An older intersex interviewee concludes:

I can well imagine an LGBTIQ senior citizens' shared apartment if younger people also live there. Not necessarily 18-year-olds, but also 50-year-olds, who have more social interactions and can talk about the outside world. When I'm 80 years old, it would be nice if someone told me that they had fallen in love. I could offer support or be happy for the person. If

only 80-year-olds live together and then one person after another disappears, that's not a fun situation (Senior interview).

## Conclusions

The factors shaping Vienna's older LGBTIQ people's views on old age communal living are experiences of a changing legal context, socio-demographic factors (race, class, gender), degrees of engagement with emancipatory social movements, the impact of different periods of crisis, practices of openness in personal expression, and the ability to generate and utilize financial and social capital. Queer ageing is shaped by national historical, legal, and movement-specific contexts of the past and present. Despite persistent social disapproval, there is a desire among queer people for intergenerational connection. Age appears in this way as a master category in the LGBTIQ universe: as bodies and minds are changing, ageing becomes a process of storing a continuity of experiences in changing times for fragile communities endangered by fragmentation and backlash. Whether queer ageing as a process can form a continuum that connects cohorts of queer people of different ages, linking predecessors with those alive today and possibly queer generations to come, remains open for closer consideration. Still, it can be assumed that by fostering intergenerational connections, communities may remain connected across time.

Finally, successful intergenerational networks in old age care can create a visibility that transforms into memorability, fulfilling a need to not be forgotten, having successfully lived an (activist) life worthy of remembrance.<sup>7</sup> In this way, queer old age housing is not only a need of ageing LGBTIQ people, but also of younger LGBTIQ individuals and communities, wishing to adequately and meaningfully care for a first generation of queer seniors.

## Notes

- 1 Schönplflug (2026) provides an in-depth analysis built on these interviews, but with an ex-post, theory-guided analysis and re-interpretation of data applied to models of old age care in feminist economics.
- 2 This classification is used for convenience, but does not necessarily represent the messiness or variety of different life experiences shaped by several factors related to, for example, class, ability and race.
- 3 A graphical cohort representation is also available for the case of lesbians and gays in Malta (Vella, 2019: 18).
- 4 In German, '*verzaubert*', meaning enchanted, was used instead of referencing identities as 'gay'.
- 5 A study by Frederiksen in 2017 showed that 'three quarters (76.24 percent) of LGBT older adults reported engaging in antidiscrimination activism, with

particularly high rates among bisexual women (82.73 percent), transgender people (80.15 percent), and individuals with higher education (80.06 percent)' (Frederiksen-Goldsen et al., 2017: 19).

6 See Schönflug, 2026.

7 It is no coincidence that in 2025 QWIEN, the queer archive in Vienna, painted Sappho's words in large letters in its entrance: 'Someone will remember us, I say, even in another time'.

## Sources

- Arnolds, S. (2019). *Queer ageing: we only lower our heads to look at our beautiful shoes*. LMag, online, December 2019, accessed April 03, 2026 at <https://www.l-mag.de/news-1010/queeres-altern-den-kopf-senken-wir-nur-um-unsere-schoenen-schuhe-zu-betrachten.html>.
- Bei, N. and Jelinek, E. (Eds.) (1986). *Das lila Wien um 1900: Zur Ästhetik der Homosexualitäten*. Vienna: Promedia.
- BKA (2026). *Strafgesetzbuch der Republik Österreich*. Kundmachungsorgan. BGBl. Nr. 60/1974 aufgehoben durch BGBl. I Nr. 134/2002, accessed April 05, 2026 at <https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/eli/bgbl/1974/60/P209/NOR12029758>
- Chazan, M. and Baldwin, M. (2019). Queering generativity and futurity: LGBTQ2IA+ stories of resistance, resurgence, and resilience. *International Journal of Ageing and Later Life*, 1–30.
- Eberhardt, V. and Temel, B. (2023 and 2024). *Verzaubert-Sein und Usambaraveilchen. - Auf den Spuren des Regenbogens in Wien*. Project by the Institute of Conflict Research, accessed April 03, 2026 at [https://www.youtube.com/@IKF\\_Wien](https://www.youtube.com/@IKF_Wien).
- European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights. (2024). *LGBTQI Equality at a Crossroads: Progress and Challenges: EU LGBTQI Survey III*. Luxembourg: Publications Office.
- Fredriksen-Goldsen, K. I., Bryan, A. E. B., Jen, S., Goldsen, J., Kim, H.-J. and Muraco, A. (2017). The unfolding of LGBT lives: key events associated with health and well-being in later life. *The Gerontologist*, 57(suppl 1), 15–29.
- Fredriksen-Goldsen, K. I., Cook-Daniels, L., Kim, H.-J., Erosheva, E. A., Emler, C. A. and Hoy-Ellis, C. P. (2014). Physical and mental health of transgender older adults: an at-risk and underserved population. *The Gerontologist*, 54(3), 488–500.
- ggg.at (2024). 'Wohnungsnot': FPÖ schäumt wegen Senioren-WG für sechs queere Pensionisten, October 29, 2024, accessed December 23, 2024 at <https://www.ggg.at/2024/10/29/wohnungsnot-fpoe-schaemt-wegen-senioren-wg-fuer-sechs-queere-pensionisten/>.
- Graham, H. (2020). Hysteresis and the sociological perspective in a time of crisis. *Acta Sociologica*, 63(4), 450–52.
- Hawthorne, O., Camic, P. M. and Rimes, K. A. (2020). Understanding the structure, experiences and challenges of social support for older lesbian, gay and bisexual people: a systematic review. *Ageing and Society*, 40(2), 282–305.
- Halberstam, J. (2005). *In a Queer Time and Place: Transgender Bodies, Subcultural Lives*. New York University Press.
- Helfritsch, P. (2024). *Verdragt Euch! / Drag Yourself Out! Lavendel, Rosen und Feuer/ Lavender, Red and Fire*. Neu-Isenburg: Westend.
- ILGA World. (2024). *Austria*, accessed December 07, 2024 at <https://database.ilga.org/austria-lgbti>.

- King, A. and Hall, M. (2023). Queer(y)ing aging-potentialities and problems in applying queer theory to studies of aging and later life. *Frontiers in Sociology*, 8, 1228993.
- Klapeer, C. M. (2025). Entangled drag/trans panics: a reflection on the intersections of anti-gender U.S. politics and recent attacks on drag storytelling in Germany and Austria. In Kreitler M. and G. Olson (Eds.), *Diversity Issues in the USA* (pp. 233–50). Bielefeld: transcript Verlag.
- Klapeer, C. M. (2007). *Queer.contexts: Entstehung und Rezeption von Queer Theory in den USA und Österreich. Demokratie im 21. Jahrhundert: Band 6*. Innsbruck, Wien, Bozen: StudienVerlag.
- Krispenz, A. and Bertrams, A. (2024). Further evidence for the dark-ego-vehicle principle: higher pathological narcissistic grandiosity and virtue signaling are related to greater involvement in LGBQ and gender identity activism. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 54(3), 1271–91.
- Leontowitsch, M., Rosenfeld, D., Lottmann, R. and Ramirez-Valles, J. (2024). Editorial: queer(ing) age(ing). *Frontiers in Sociology*, 9, 1435561.
- Muñoz, J. E. (2009). *Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity*. New York University Press.
- QWIEN (2024). *Befreiter Regenbogen. Die Beseitigung von Verfolgung und Diskriminierung in Österreich 1945–2024*. Wien: Bundesministerium für Justiz.
- Ramirez-Valles, J. (2016) *Queer aging: The gayby boomers and a new frontier for gerontology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Rosenfeld, D. and Ramirez-Valles, J. (2024). Beyond identity and generations: bringing life course theory to studies of older gay men. *Frontiers in Sociology*, 9, 1393607.
- Sandberg, L. and Marshall, B. (2017). Queering aging futures. *Societies*, 7(3), 21.
- Schönpflug, K. (2026). Feminist economics and queer aging: exploring caring labor through LGBTQI narratives in older ages. *IJAL*, March 27th 2026: <https://doi.org/10.3384/ijal.1652-8670.5625>.
- Schönpflug, K. and Eberhardt, V. (2021). *Senior\*innen-WGs für LGBTQI+-Personen: Bedarfsbewertung: Research report*. IHS Vienna, accessed April 07, 2026 at <https://www.ihs.ac.at/de/forschung/forschungsprojekte/project-details/seniorinnen-wgs-fuer-lgbtqi-personen-bedarfsbewertung/>
- Schönpflug, K., Eberhardt, V. and Hofmann, R. (2025). *Queer in Wien II*. IHS Vienna, accessed April 07, 2026 at <https://www.wien.gv.at/zusammenleben/studie-queer-in-wien-2025>
- Shukrallah, T. (Ed.) (2024). *Ver/sammeln Antirassistischer Kämpfe: Vol. 1. Nicht die Ersten: Bewegungsgeschichten von Queers of Color in Deutschland*. Hamburg: Assoziation A.
- Siverskog, A. and Bromseth, J. (2019). Subcultural spaces: LGBTQ aging in a Swedish context. *International Journal of Aging & Human Development*, 88(4), 325–40.
- Tackie, L. (2022). *BlackLivesMatter als Handlungsrahmen für queeren Aktivismus in Wien? Eine Annäherung*, accessed April 03, 2026 at <https://services.phaidra.univie.ac.at/api/object/o:1622110/download>.
- Trafford, M., Bleakley, P. and Maayani, M. (2024). ‘Fighting within the rainbow’: discourses on internal conflict among LGBTQIA+ college students in cyber spaces. *Sociological Spectrum*, 45(54), 1–13.
- Traies, J. (2018). Older lesbians, ageing and equality. In S. Westwood (ed.), *Older Lesbians, Ageing and Equality* (pp. 101–113). London: Routledge.
- Vella, C. (2019). *Narratives Of Older Lesbian And Gay Persons: Exploring Disparities Within Social and Health Care Support in Malta*. Dissertation. University of Malta.

Volkshilfe Wien (2024). *Raum für Respekt*, accessed April 03, 2026 at <https://www.volkshilfe-wien.at/raum-fuer-respekt-2/>.