



Combating ageism by extending the integrated life-course perspective

‘Ageing 4.0’

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Overview

- The linkage between ageism and chronological age limits
 - The case of education, labour markets and pension age(s)
- New challenges for cross-sectional statutory policies
 - Rising longevity, new technologies ('Industry 4.0')
- The concept of 'Ageing 4.0'
 - Adapting welfare states to new social risks over the life course

Ageist ideology and labour market policies

- Excluding workers and placing them in a disadvantaged situation relative to others on the basis of their **chronological age**
 - Early retirement strategies (1970s/80s) vs. ‘lump of labour fallacy’
 - Debates on lower vs. higher productivity of ‘older workers’
 - Policies to ‘extend working lives’ vs. stereotypes, prejudices and discrimination based on **chronological age limits**

Sources: McMullin & Marshall, 2001; Stypińska & Nikander, 2018; Naegele et al, 2018

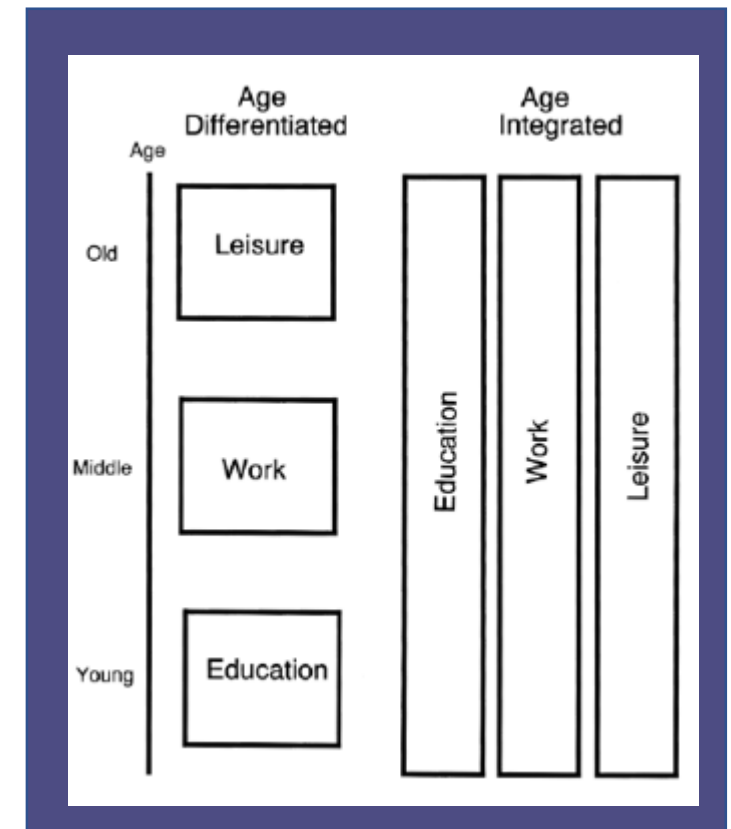
Difficult transitions over the life-course

- Deterioration of youth transitions to work
 - Downward pressure on job security, decreasing benefit coverage
 - Increasing rates of NEETs
 - Inequalities in transitions regarding job quality linked to family resources
 - Challenging futures: increasing mobility, new patterns of starting a new family
- Difficulties in transitions from (unpaid) family care back to work
- The challenge of 'older workers' and extending working lives

Sources: O'Reilly et al, 2019; Dearing, 2015; Naegele & Bauknecht, 2019

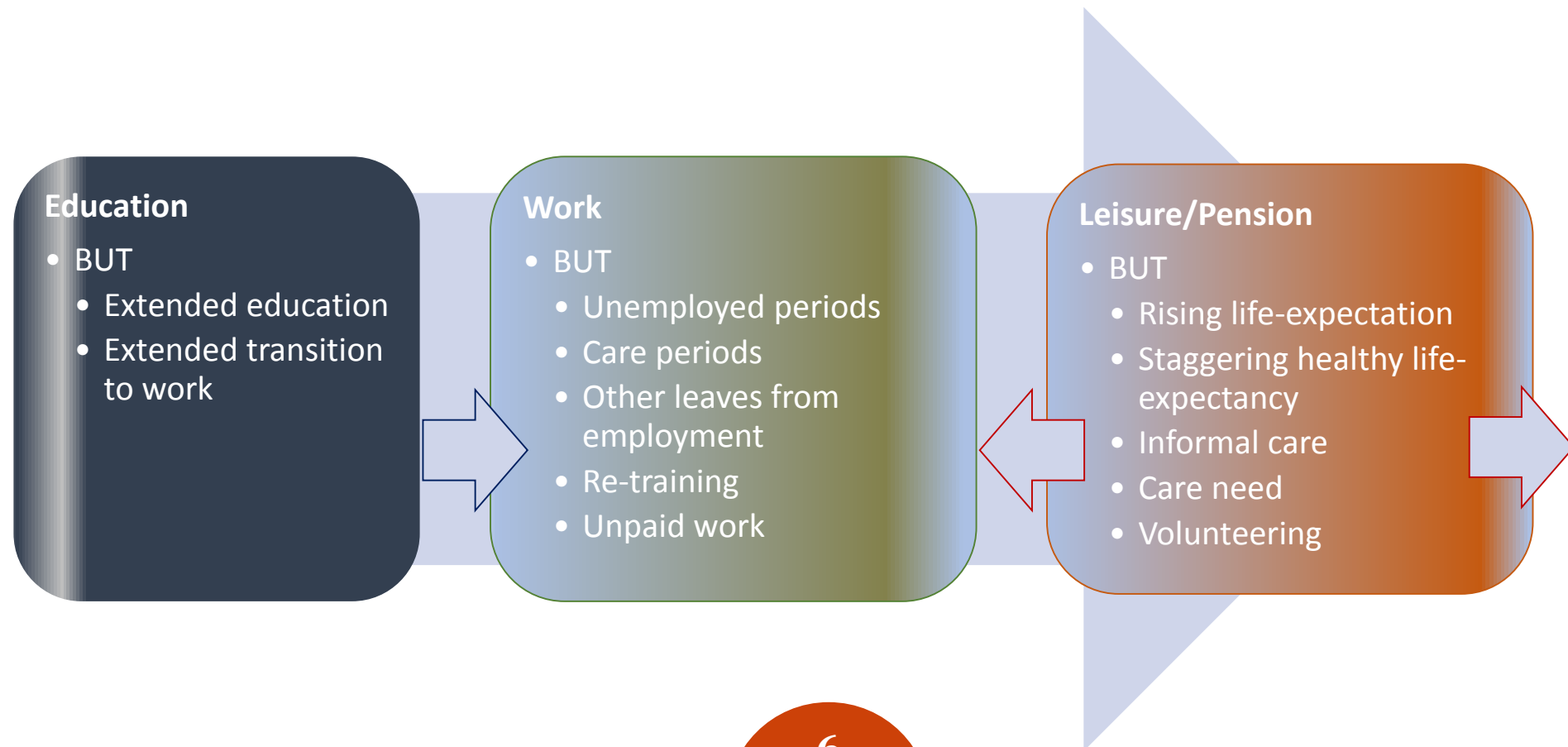
From age differentiation to age integration

- Is the differentiated life-course model still applicable?
- The assignment of tasks and activities to defined age brackets has become outdated
- The age-integrated model conceives of activities as taking place simultaneously, rather than subsequently



Source: Riley & Riley, 2000: 267

The continuous disintegration of traditional life-course patterns (age differentiation)



The solicitations of policies addressing population ageing

- Life-long learning
 - But: social selectivity of basic and further education systems
- Active and healthy ageing
 - But: extending working lives with unequal chances and inequities due to cumulated disadvantages over the life course
 - Normative concept of 'staying healthy' ('successful ageing')
- Reconciliation of work and family life
 - Child care and care for older family members, work-life balance

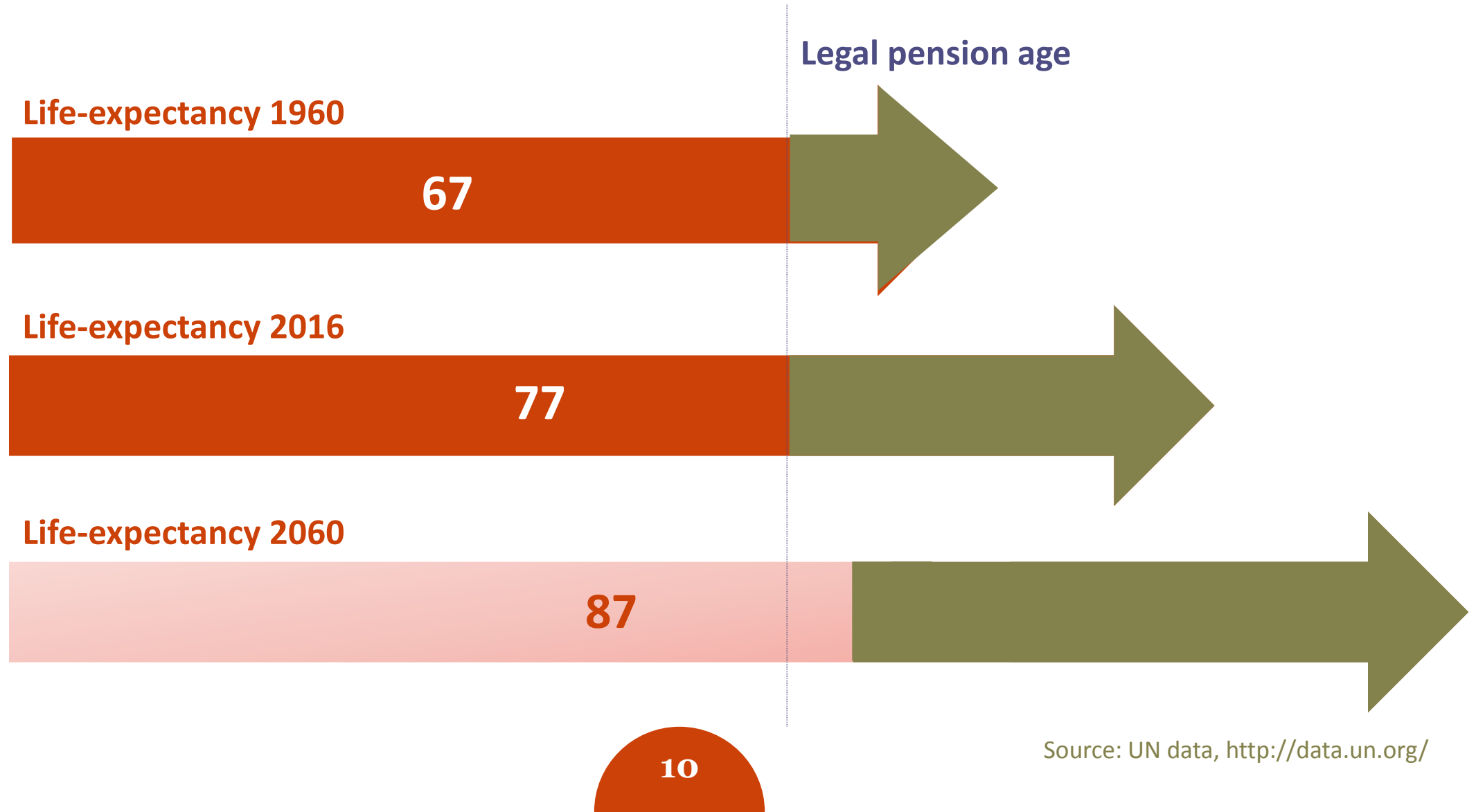
Paid work as the unique means for social inclusion?

- Unpaid work as the 'lucky finding' of capitalism
- Unpaid household work remains 'female'
- Volunteering as yet another solicitation of policies
 - Volunteering needs to be underpinned by capacity-building and local organisations providing supportive structural resources

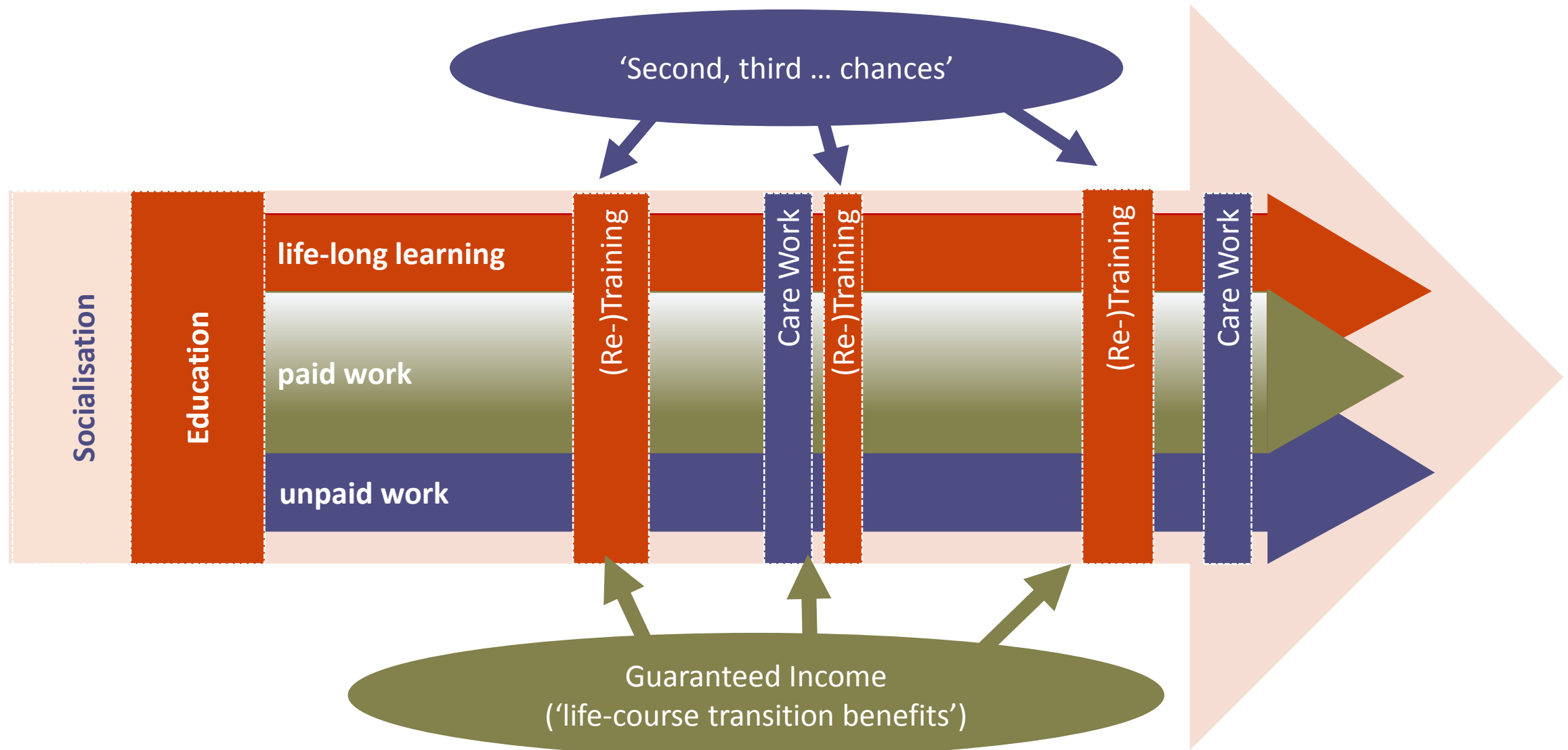
Anticipating future life-course developments: Ageing 4.0

- Facilitating new trajectories and transitions
 - Between paid/unpaid work
 - Between education/training and paid work
 - Between family obligations and work/leisure
- Incentives for 're-training', 'upgrading courses', 'care leaves'
 - Every x years with rights and obligations (further education account, income secured)
- Facilitating inter-generational equity
 - Providing 'second, third ... chances'

Longer lives as an opportunity for new types of life-courses



Ageing 4.0: Integrated life-course perspectives in a society characterized by solidarity



Ageing 4.0: Economic and social dimensions

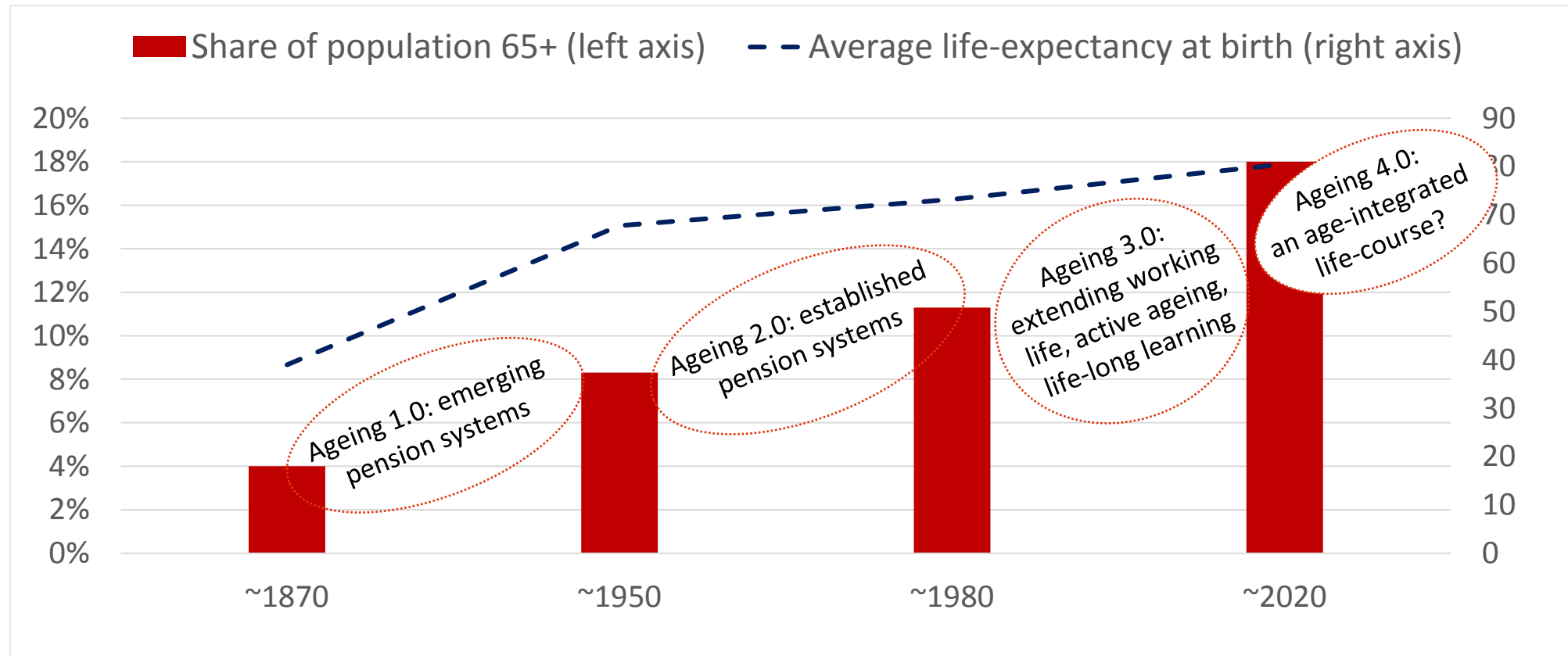
Inequalities and inequities are in most cases based on lack of education and lack of 'second chances' over the life-course.

Examples for preventive and enabling interventions:

- Early childhood education and support, new types of learning and schooling, education guarantee for adolescents (avoidance of NEETs), Re-training as part of Active Labour Market Policies (Job/Training Foundations) ...
- Reforms have contributed to new, but individualised trajectories with unequal opportunities

Sources: Garcia & Weiss, 2015; Sahn & Younger, 2007

Ageing 4.0 in a historical perspective



Source: Leichsenring, 2018

Ageing 4.0: Economic and social dimensions

Individual life courses and the welfare state in a broader sense are inextricably linked

- Norms are constructing the life-course by determining the chronological age at which people are in education, how long they are in training, and when they retire
- New risks, new trajectories, new transitions – differing according to access and rights to minimum income, education, housing, health ... (welfare regimes)
 - Direct impact: e.g. start/end of formal education, retirement age
 - Indirect impact: social norms regarding age of marriage, cultures of care, having children, gendered divide between paid/unpaid work ...

Sources: Mayer and Schoepflin, 1989; Kohli, 2007

Ageing 4.0: Addressing new social risks in transitions over the life-course

- **Risk distribution** characterized by solidarity, rather than by individualised risk management (inequality), does not mean to get rid of individual responsibilities
- Reduction of **gendered life-course perspectives**
- Acknowledgement of **unpaid reproduction work**
- Adaptation to **technology-induced challenges**: skills development
- Equalization of **demand and supply patterns** (consumer and labour markets)
- **Facilitating transitions** (school to work, care to work, work to training ...)
- Facilitating a **new 'generational contract'**

Ageing 4.0: Cost-benefit considerations

Micro level (individuals):

- Flexibility and openness for change required
- Gains throughout careers from better qualification and work-life balance

Meso level (companies):

- Family-friendly policies increase productivity, job satisfaction and motivation, reduce absenteeism
- Flexible solutions for (planned) absences for leaves (child care, care for older kin, education/training) are needed

Macro level (society):

- Social investments required to provide income security and support during (educational) leaves and periods of 'unpaid reproduction work'
- Increasing productivity and motivation, facilitating work at higher ages

Action needed

Embarking into the paradigm change

- Changing narratives: combining economics, demography, social gerontology and social policy, rather than playing against each other (also across sectors and levels of governance)
- Including both paid and unpaid labour
- Shifting values

Tackle old-age poverty and inequalities

- A life-course perspective, including cumulative inequalities

Designing social investment and new welfare

- Preventative, participative, inclusive, creating values for the individual and the community: from 'ego' to 'eco'

Discussion

What areas of social policy (social security, social services in kind and in cash, education, housing ...) would need what types of amendments to support and facilitate the age-integrated life-course perspective?

First ideas:

- Individual accounts? (pension, education/training ...)
- Conditional minimum income (life-course transition benefits): What conditions? Entitlements? Design and incentives (e.g. care/maternity/paternity leave + return to employment, 'second chance education'/training + case management in employment)
- Getting rid of chronological age boundaries: education, pension ... BUT: fluent transition in a long-term perspective? How to secure the right to pension?

Discussion

What priorities for action to improve preconditions for active ageing in an integrated life-course perspective?

- Labour market and education: preventive social welfare support mechanisms at transitions (early childhood intervention, education guarantee, ALMP at transitions, including LLL and 'second chance education'- 'transition benefits')
- Independent, healthy and safe living: reform of care leaves and support for informal carers, extension of support services, needs assessment (also of carers)
- Participation in society: facilitation of volunteering – new types of partnerships with 'Third Sector' (cooperatives, associations)
- Environment for active ageing: public debate on 'ageism' and the role of chronological age boundaries

Discussion

What opportunities does the integrated life-course approach offer regarding research on ageism ?

Further reading

www.euro.centre.org

