

Note conclusive discussion Jola session

theme of the discussion: the future of research on ageism

Wouter: we need change over time, in OECD ageism was seen as an issue of economic exclusion at the beginning, now it is seen more and more as an issue of social exclusion. Before it was more about retirement age and keeping people in the labor market, now it is about inclusion of older persons in later life. We are just starting to investigate ageism, so we welcome input from academia to work on the issue. One specific problem that we have is that the leavers of combating ageism are at local and lower level and we have the difficulties in reaching them. At local level there is not knowledge about what policies are existing and that's where the expertise is missing also. We encourage researchers to reach out to local levels.

Klaus: ageism is a multifaced phenomena and is very complex, there are many intersections and different groups affected, for example: men and women, rich and poor, well-educated and persons with low skills, urban and county living persons, young old and old old persons. There are many forms of ageism in the literature but two are the most striking now:

1. traditional ageism: exclusion of older people (succession and burden for society)
2. new modern form of ageism or new ageism: we expect older persons to stay active and productive pushing on them a new type of ageism not based on ageing as decay but on ageing as productivity.

Both these types of ageism are grounded in the idea that life in old age is less valuable and less important and this idea is always with us and that's why fighting ageism is so difficult. So, we have to develop a more dignified version of what it means to live a dignified and rightful life when you are old, really old.

Kai: one possible way to get rid of ageism is to show how we can change our ideas of the life course. Many individuals are trying to change their life course, moving from one job to another or into care. This is made difficult by institutionalized ageism, so we need to overcome the structure of life course made by institutions that is not anymore fitting a new idea of life course that is emerging. If we want to get rid of ageism based on chronological age limits, we need to create new institutional structures that allows it.

Ciaran: Let's be careful what we wish for about successful ageing. There is a tendency to commodify older persons when we realize that the wealth in the countries is in the financial capabilities of older persons. We need to remember that during covid-19 pandemic, every over 70 was instructed to self-isolate.

Wouter: removing retirement age is the first for of increasing social inequalities

Kai: to restructure the life course we need new forms of economical support.

Klaus: educational opportunities can increase precarity and disadvantage, we need to guarantee support to people who will not be able to access this training, life courses are not equal.

Ciaran: the intersectionality in older life increases, we need to remember that we have to be equal to everybody.