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CONTEXTUALISING AGEISM IN AN INTERDISCIPLINARY PERSPECTIVE AN INTRODUCTION

ĽUBICA VOĽANSKÁ

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We live in a time of discussions about potential threats posed to humanity by artificial intelligence or the robotisation of society (Clifford, 2017; Walker, 2017) in connection with the possible loss of jobs or certain professions. Consequently, the importance of dealing with the relationship between work and retirement, the prolongation of the time of retirement or, in general, intergenerational relationships in society is becoming particularly relevant.

Nevertheless, at the end of the last century, some voices began to call for reviewing the value of work in personal and social life, emphasising the importance of leisure (Blaikie, 1999). However, the oldest generation in society, which is becoming increasingly numerous mainly within the European environment given the demographic development (The 2018 Ageing Report) is still confronted with the curse of "competence" and "productivity" related to paid work, being used as benchmarks for determining the status and position of individuals in society. More than a hundred years of modern economic thinking contributed to the creation of a single-dimensional point of view of productivity mostly through the technical function of industrial work production.

In this respect, a debate on the 'war between generations' was launched some thirty years ago. This term was used by the British daily newspaper The Guardian in a provocative article: "Will the Third World War be a war between generations rather than states?" (Walker, 1996: 2). The year before, a similar topic was raised by the German Der Spiegel in its headline. The article in The Guardian was written as a reaction to the almanac produced by social historians Paul Johnson, David Thomson and Christoph Conrad "Workers vs. Pensioners" (1989), published shortly before. Their papers concerned the functioning of welfare states in Western Europe and, in principle, all of them came to a similar conclusion: the declining fertility rates, increased life expectancy and early retirement question the fundaments of social insurance within the anyway economically fragile balance in the welfare state: increasingly larger groups of old non-productive (sic!) people should be supported by increasingly smaller groups of active people in their productive age. According to the authors, this constellation leads to conflicts of interests between age groups or cohorts, which will sooner or later result in an open generational conflict. The debate about the 'parasitism' of the older generation over the younger one, related to the emerging imbalance of the 'three pennies agreement' that I discussed elsewhere

(Voľanská, 2017), stands somewhere in the background of the rise of ageism, which can be understood both in the wider or narrower sense of the word.

In a wider sense, ageism means systematic stereotyping, discrimination or unfair treatment based on a person's age (under the same principle it can be applied also on a group). Under ageism we understand a highly prevalent complex and often negative social construction of old age. However, the term is also used to name prejudice and discrimination against adolescents and children, including ignoring their ideas because they are too young, or assuming that they should behave in certain ways because of their age. Antony Giddens similar to Erdman B. Palmore (1999) for example understands ageism as discrimination of people on grounds of their age in general. According to Giddens, people in modern societies are generally judged based on their age, not properties, activities and identities (Giddens, 1999: 145–146).

Lucie Vidovićová suggests an operational definition: "Operationally, we define it and talk about it where there is a qualitative distinction between individuals and groups based on their chronological age or membership in a particular cohort, and when different characteristics and capabilities are attributed to them and barriers to enter, exit, or participate in the roles, benefits, services, and other sources of social life are defined." (Vidovićová, 2008: 144).

The term ageism was coined in 1969 by Robert Neil Butler in an interview in The Washington Post, in the same year it became a part of the Oxford English Dictionary. In his sense it described discrimination against seniors, and is patterned on sexism and racism. Ageism is manifested across a wide range of phenomena at the individual and institutional levels; it can entail stereotypes and myths, contempt and frustration, subtle avoidance of contact or even discrimination practices in the field of housing, employment and services of all kinds (Butler, 1989; Butler, 2005). It can include specific language that is used when talking about attitudes and perceptions of aging and older adults, as well as the way that older people are represented in the media, which can have a wider impact on the public's attitudes. No less important, it can also impact on someone's confidence, job prospects, financial situation and quality of life.

The nature of ageism concerning old age is different from the above-mentioned other "-isms": the "us vs. them" attitude – we´re young, they're old and old age doesn't concern us – is changing over time. The dichotomy of the 'in-group' and 'out-group' in the case of old age and youth acquires a different dimension compared to other kind of differentiation between 'we and the others'. Everybody who is young will once become old. The whole situation becomes paradoxical in the sense that 'non-old' people discriminate against their 'future selves,' the perpetrator (in-group) will in the future become a part of the victimized category (out-group) (Jönson, 2013).

The problem with 'othering' emerges when other people are constructed as fundamentally different, united as a group and hidden under a 'they'. It is allowed to explore the lives of old people; as old age relates to the conditions of their life (they have become older); yet to talk about 'the old ones' as a homogenous group means to create a category of people whom we define only on the basis of their old age itself. And this is an excessively one-sided approach.

Finally, it has been pointed out that stigmatization does not only occur outside of the cohesively imagined group of the elderly but likewise takes place within the stigmatized group itself. When we live our entire life in a society which categorises

people according to their age and often discriminates against people of certain age (no matter if such discrimination is conscious or unconscious), we are liable to adapt these ideas. The same mechanism works in the case of ageist stereotypes. "Internalized ageism is a form of in-group discrimination in which older adults marginalize and discriminate against other older people. Internalized ageism can manifest itself in a number of ways including denying commonality with others within your own group (e.g., an older adult who does not want to be associated with 'all of those old people', an older adult who isolates themselves for fear of being 'othered', an older adult going to extreme measures to look younger)." (Gendron et alia, 2016: 998).

WHY RESEARCH OF OLD AGE AND AGEISM AND ETHNOLOGY/ SOCIAL AND CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY?

To research the binary in-group/out-group opposition or the dichotomy of 'we' and the 'others' is one of the most important domains of ethnology/cultural and social anthropology. Concerning the second idea of internalised ageism the task of the mentioned disciplines is also to make visible the phenomena that at first sight seem so obvious, ordinary and daily-lived that we do not even feel the need to pay attention to them, let alone to see or observe them. Thanks to ethnological research instruments, we can thus better understand daily life issues through the context of culture and possibly subject them to criticism.

Regarding the connection of the research of various age groups as well as ageism (in a wider or narrower sense): ethnology, social and cultural anthropology have not particularly concentrated on the special phase of old age by the research of non-European societies.

With respect to ageing, it was gerontology as a scientific discipline that dealt first with the description, explanation and transformation of the physical, psychological and social aspects of old age and ageing, including an analysis of the environment and social institutions that are relevant to the constitution of old age and ageing (Baltes, Mittelstraß, 1992: 8). Its beginnings related to the demographic changes in Europe in the 1930s and were therefore linked to the mapping of economic, social and health issues. Gerontology represents a scientific discipline which has from its origins been characterised by major links between society, politics, medicine and the results of scientific research, adapted to the momentary needs of society. According to Anton Amann, it is a "never-ending struggle for notions, terms, assessments and judgements. It is a struggle for the 'right' explanation, for the meaning of what is happening – an endless struggle for power, especially for symbolic power, i.e. the recognition of social, cultural and economic institutions, the state of society" (Amann, 2004: 111). In the case of the situation of elderly people, it is mostly various economic statistics, demographic research and prognoses that penetrate the public discourse and claim that the oldest generation represents a burden for society. Utilising the results of such research, various institutions (of state or local administration) seem to fight by means of 'powerful' numbers for the right to be able to unilaterally define the way to view the world.

The primary focus of the extensive empirical research in the field of gerontology and geriatrics is not on the creation of theories. It is deeply rooted in applied research

with a strong orientation towards various policies (Jamieson, 2002: 15). Such research focus is very important both to all those working in the field of healthcare and social care of elderly people and to elderly people as such. However, the prevalence of this type of research in the field of gerontology overshadowed the development of the theoretical aspects. A different situation can be observed in the field of cultural gerontology where the authors have recently begun dealing with the theoretical aspects of their work.[1]

A comprehensive work covering cultural or social anthropology of old age or the history or historical anthropology of old age is non-existent so far, and I think it is justified to ask in this regard whether it is possible at all to write such a work. Most publications have the form of case studies from different cultural environments from all over the world. It would be hard to find a "grand theory" embracing the entire topic in the field of social gerontology. As mentioned above, the attempts to formulate it have failed. Richard A. Settersten and Lisa M. Dobransky called this situation an "unbearable lightness of theory in social gerontology" (2000). Anne Jamieson discusses whether theory is indeed such 'unbearable light' in social gerontology... in other words, if a 'grand theory' is missing, is it a problem? (Jamieson, 2002, 10). This question relates to another one: what is theory and what is its purpose? The simplest definition could be that it is an explanation, the answer to the question 'why', different from empirical description. Theorising thus entails, in addition to empirical observation, the generalisation of the observations, while both of them form its integral part. The development of the theory allows us to understand and find the meaning of empirical research findings and, at the same time, it provides us with frameworks and ideas for further research. It can also help increase sensitivity in revealing existing prejudices and actions in daily life and develop new ways of understanding the world by overcoming the existing and prevailing discourses. The missing theory could thus set limits for the value of the research. The solution applied by some gerontologists is therefore an interdisciplinary approach and the interlinking of gerontology, anthropology and other sciences.

Since gerontology was institutionalised in the 1940s as a reaction to the challenge posed by demographic ageing in Europe, from the beginning it concentrated on the interaction between biological and social ageing, and thus contributed to greater visibility of old age as an autonomous phase of human life. In their works, gerontologists blamed various anthropological works for not focusing specifically on the old-age stage in the research of non-European societies. Margaret Clark already some time ago noted that the time span between marriage and death seems to be a monotonous field or "ethnographic vacuum" (Clark, Anderson, 1967: 433). For many cultures marriage means the entry into older age; old age is not defined with any other special limit. At the end of the 20th century, however, the situation began to gradually change and the number of ethnological or anthropological research activities and publications within the wide interdisciplinary field of cultural and social gerontology has been gradually rising (Sokolovsky, 2009).

Recent works point to the complexity of aging as a process and to the diverse and, moreover, ever-changing experience of older people in relation to different social spaces and frameworks such as class, ethnic origin, social organization, gender and

1 An overview can be found in Twigg, Martin, 2015.

geographical area in which they live (Gramshammer-Hohl, 2017; Kriebernegg, Maierhofer & Ratzenböck, 2014; Kriebernegg, Maierhofer, 2013; Lynch & Danely, 2013).

The exploration of the 'normal' characteristics of ageing in different countries of the world, i.e. the exploration of the context, pertains mainly to the domain of socio-cultural anthropology. The works by two US anthropologists – Margaret Clark and her disciple Sharon Kaufman – can be considered the beginnings of the approach of contextually situated ageing and old age. Margaret Clark (1967) is considered to be the author of the direction which is usually called anthropologically informed gerontology, characterised by abandoning the approach to ageing as a universal process of biological and psychological decline. The cultural models of ageing in the 1960s were marked by debates conducted by the supporters of the disengagement theory and activity theory. Clark, on the other side, viewed ageing as an interactive, socially established process adapted to the specific cultural context. She worked across disciplines which resulted in mutually enriching discussions. Clark called for supporting comparative research between cultures – especially in societies where old people did not experience such cultural discontinuities as old people in the US. According to her, ageing is less stressful in societies where the basic values are compatible with the capabilities, resources and opportunities which are available to the oldest citizens. For the same reason, the oldest generation is less exposed to ageism.

The question still to be answered is that to what extent the concept of active or successful ageing, being rooted in the European and North-American environment, is compatible with her recommendation.

The year 2012 was declared the European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between generations, where the term 'active ageing' in connection with the oldest generation is understood as the preservation of physical and mental health, independence, participation in public matters, and also relates to the feeling of satisfaction. Many countries of the global North face ever stronger critical voices about the standards of this concept.[2] Its critics (such as Lamb, 2017; Stückler, 2017; van Dyk, Lessenich, 2009) question the ambivalence of this concept. One of the most popular arguments of the defenders of the active ageing concept is the highlighting of its role in the fight against ageism and xenophobia which, however, represents a certain devaluation of the age category that it is meant to protect. Although the premise of the activity can have positive effects on the negative connotations linked to old age (such as decline and passivity), this perspective emphasises the fact that the potential of older people has become the subject of specific interest, as the rising numbers of older people began to be viewed as a problem.

Nevertheless, there is an increasing number of manuals (practical guides) and expert publications which consider positive ageing as the only solution. The criticism that Stephen Katz articulated almost twenty years ago in connection with the interlinking of activity and the feeling of satisfaction, health and successful ageing, as promoted by gerontologists, thus seems to be still relevant: "The association of

2 Researchers also criticise the methods of measurement and detection of the presence or implementation of this concept in different countries in the framework of the Active Ageing Index research (de São José, Timonen, Filipe Amado, Pereira Santos, 2017).

activity with well-being in old age seems so obvious and indisputable that questioning it within gerontological circles would be considered unprofessional, if not heretical" (Katz, 2000: 135).

SLOVAK PERSPECTIVE

According to the Eurobarometer survey of 2015, exactly half of Slovakia's population think that the most widespread form of discrimination is discrimination based on age, concerning people older than 55 years. It is eight percent more than the average of all European Union countries, where 42 percent of citizens complain about such disadvantage (Discrimination in the EU in 2015). The Institute of Public Affairs brought similar results in 2013 with research showing such a perception is universally present. "It is prevalent in all generations, among women and men, people with different education and economic status, in communities/townships of various sizes and in all regions of Slovakia" (Bútorová et al, 2013: 23). The public considers the most important issues related to the elderly to be: low living standards, poor social and pension provisions (59%), weakened health and poor health care (50%). At the same time, the respondents in the research stressed the failure of the state and society to respect the needs of the country's seniors, ignorance and discrimination, especially discrimination in the labour market (Bútorová et al, 2013: 27).

And even though nowadays there are more open discussions in Slovakia than ever, ageism – that is, age discrimination – is not addressed by the public at large. The word ageism is not present or processed in Slovak dictionaries (nor in Slovak dictionaries of foreign words). In Slovak academic and journalistic texts, we can find the graphic form *ageizmus* with the second part -izmus, the suffix is usually present in Slovak description of various streams, styles or concepts. Given the pronunciation of the English term *ageism* from which the foreign word *ageizmus* originates, it is possible to assume the pronunciation, which is the basis for the adapted form of the expression in Slovak (adapted to the Slovak spelling). On the Internet, several entries can be found showing that Slovak language practice already uses this form pointing to a higher degree of vernacularization. However, in the Slovak language the most widespread use of widely-understood expressions is the *discrimination of the elderly* (also referred to in English-Slovak dictionaries as the Slovak equivalent of the word ageism), old age discrimination or age discrimination. However, these terms have a negative connotation. It seems, there is a clear prevalence of the connection of ageism with old age, not considering the possibility of discrimination of younger generations as well.

The Program for the Protection of the Elderly dealing with seniors' rights was adopted by the Government of the Slovak Republic in 1999. It is based on UN Principles for Older Persons, namely the principles of independence, participation in care, self-esteem and dignity, and elaborates on issues of social protection and care for the elderly. In this document, the economic and social level of aging issues, the social security system, health care and institutional care have come to the forefront, and they are also the most medially presented topics in the Slovak environment. However, very little is said about how society should reflect old age as such, what should be the quality of life in the old age, what conditions for the elderly should be provided by society itself, and especially that it is necessary to contextualize and relieve the monolithic view of aging and old age often leading to ageism.

In the Slovak environment, the main way of challenging ageism is, despite its controversial perception and the critical voice coming mainly from abroad, inspired by the concept of active aging. The National Active Aging strategy project, focusing on the detailed development of the demographic aging context with the labour market and the pension system, including the incorporation of strategic objectives in this area and the draft measures to meet these objectives, was completed in June 2013. Complementary to the Active Aging Strategy the National Aging Agenda for the years 2014 – 2020 is elaborated, in which Slovakia refers to the problem of active aging as a political priority in its entire complexity.

"This is a new and comprehensive program document aimed at supporting the human rights of older people by activating them through public support policies. It is not just about older people's employment and employability policies (primarily the Active Aging Strategy) but also policies to support their lifelong learning, civic and social activities outside the formal labour market, promoting their independence, dignity, economic and social security, including protection against ill-treatment in all social spheres and relationships."[3]

Similarly, in the social sciences and humanities in Slovakia the topics of old age, ageing and ageism represent a new theme, the ethnological/anthropological research presents no exception[4]. In the past, research has primarily focused on the position of elderly people in family in rural settings, whilst the specific age group of elderly people has been examined only exceptionally. We consider the current issue of Slovak Ethnology dedicated to ageism to be a small contribution to raising awareness related to this topic.

THIS ISSUE OF SLOVENSKÝ NÁRODOPIS / SLOVAK ETHNOLOGY

This issue of Slovenský národopis / Slovak Ethnology is partly a result of the cooperation of colleagues from the network originating in COST[5] Action IS 1402 Ageism – a multi-national, interdisciplinary perspective. The task of the Action is to enhance the scientific knowledge and attention to ageism, to bring together and integrate the different disciplines of research, to develop national, multi-national and international collaborations with public policy officials, non-academic professionals, civil society NGOs and older persons. The core idea behind the COST Action is to raise public awareness and sensitise civil society, enact and enforce laws, correct false beliefs, etc. The primary goal is using the experiences and research results to develop reference points and recommendations for fields of action aiming at reducing ageism.[6] One of the highly anticipated results is the open access book of the editors Liat Ayalon

3 National Programme of Active Ageing accessible on: https://www.minv.sk/swift_data/source/rozvoj_obcianskej_spolocnosti/rada_vlady_pre_mno/rokovania/2013/5_rokovanie/MPSVR_narodny-program-aktivneho-starnutia_material.pdf

4 For a general overview look at Voľanská, 2016.

5 COST (European Cooperation in Science and Technology) is a platform supporting European researchers in the effort to develop their ideas and initiatives across all scientific disciplines through trans-European networking of nationally funded research.

6 http://www.cost.eu/COST_Actions/isch/IS1402. www.notoageism.com

and Clemens Tesch-Römer *Contemporary Perspectives on Ageism* (2018). Contributors from over 20 countries and a variety of disciplines collaborated on topics related to the origins of the concept of ageism, its manifestation and consequences, as well as ways how to research ageism and how to respond to ageism.

The contributions in this issue present examples of multidisciplinary research dealing with the cultural dimension of old age, aging and ageism, they concentrate on how representations of this particular part of the human life course are created and used within various cultural contexts. The four articles have backgrounds in social anthropology, sociology, psychology, and communication studies; and come from four different countries (Czech Republic, Romania, Serbia and Slovakia). All of the articles concentrate on old age, mirroring the academic production's clear prevalence of ageism perceived as being connected to old age.

In these countries, the topic of old age and ageing[7] is not a wide spread phenomenon in the academic production in social sciences and humanities. It was mostly North America and Western Europe, where the focus of old age and ageism research has up to now rested upon, although ageing of the population and ageism are definitely a world-wide phenomenon (Nelson 2011; North, Fiske, 2015). The contributions of this issue present small pieces of the mosaic coming from the often exoticised Central-Eastern or South-Eastern Europe and trying to fill the blind spots on the map.

Two of the articles concentrate on the representation of ageism in different kinds of media and two of the articles concentrate on finding the proper person. Or better said: finding a person of the proper age, whether for needs concerning our professional, private or family life. The contributions are based on qualitative research grounded in interviews and media analysis.

Ivana B. Petrović, Svetlana Čizmić and Milica Vukelić in their article *It was great, they were all young! Is there ageism in students' reflections on professional internship?* deal with what was for them the somehow surprising results of fifty internship reports and discussions with several generations of work and organizational psychology students (undergraduate and master level) that completed their studies in the period 2013 – 2017 at the University of Belgrade (Faculty of Philosophy, Department of Psychology). Noting the tendency of students to choose specific types of companies for their obligatory internship stays (more students expressed interest for a smaller number of organizations) they problematise the concepts of covert and overt ageism based on presumed psychological distance from older generations of colleagues and mentors at work.

The next contribution focuses on an explicit form of ageism. As the title indicates Lucie Vidovićová and Michaela Honelová in *A case study of ageism in political debates: are social media a latent source of generational hatred?* present a case study of the social media channels, more specifically YouTube based video political campaigning and Facebook site to draw a picture of negative connotations of old age. The contents carry and convey meaning which feeds assumptions and judgments based on the dichotomy of the in-group and out-group. These discursive practices are intertwined with the stereotypes and discrimination and may contribute to worsening the relationship between generations in society. In addition, the paper

7 The situation in the Czech Republic being an exception.

argues that they may have only limited influence over the actual behaviour of both younger and older in elections and political representations.

Loredana Ivan, Ioana Schiau and Corina Buzoianu target in their study *The Use of a Drawing Tool to Assess the Implicit Ageism of Students* the same group as the authors of the first contribution of this issue, namely undergraduate students from a public university. Similarly, the authors concentrate on the implicit ageism, this time they assess the students' visual representations of older people. Students were asked to draw pictures of elderly people, and the examination of the features of the drawings allowed the authors to talk about the implicit ageism and the way a drawing tool could be a valid tool to examine implicit ageism. Although the use of drawing tools is indicated in the literature as a reliable technique to study attitudes and prejudice especially in classrooms, till now few studies have employed drawing tools to study ageism.

The contribution of Zuzana Sekeráková Búriková *Choosing the right age group?: Intersectional analysis of demand for paid domestic workers in Slovakia* is based on ethnographic interview. The author interviewed paid carers and their employers in Bratislava and Banská Bystrica between the years 2013 – 2015. She argues that employers of local paid domestic workers use age as connoting particular qualities considered as necessary for undertaking paid care or housework. In particular, specific age groups are seen as more or less suitable for doing a particular type of paid domestic work (e.g. cleaning, daily care for an infant, babysitting). The author further argues, when making decisions who to employ the age does not operate as an isolated individual category. Rather, it operates in intersection with other categories such as gender and can be understood only when we adopt an intersectional perspective.

The last part of this issue combines both, peoples' personal stories with the realm of the media. We are very glad that we can present the inspiring work of the British photographer, speaker and writer Alex Rotas dedicated to athletes and the process of growing older. Alex Rotas is a retired academic and competitive tennis player, one of the UK's most compelling commentators, and examples of the *new ageing narrative*.

The book essay is a result of the connection of a book review of Alex Rotas's book *Growing Old Competitively: Photographs of Masters Athletes* (2014) with the ideas brought to the topic of ageism, but not exclusively, by the author herself in an interview with the guest of editor this issue, Ľubica Voľanská. With her book and photographs Alex Rotas challenges ageism through filling the gap of missing representation of elderly sportsmen in the world of media. The essay opens up the topics of body and embodiment that are important in relation to discussions about sport and particularly athletics, third age (Laslett, 1989) as the part of life cycle replete with fulfilment, the liberating idea of starting something new in old age and the freedom of making mistakes and feeling no pressure in doing so and last but not least, the model of active or successful ageing as well as the critique of this concept.

Two of the other the book reviews in this issue also deal mostly with the topics of old age and intergenerational relations. The book title *"Young Minds, Old Bodies" Ageing in autobiographies from Bratislava and Vienna ("V hlave tridsať v krížoch sto" Starnutie v autobiografiách v Bratislave a Viedni*) is a quotation of one of Ľubica Voľanská's partners in research. Based on the autobiographical texts from both cities she concentrates, but not exclusively, on the search for the boundaries of old age as seen from the perspectives of the elderly people themselves. Zuzana Sekeráková

Búriková's work *Ladies for Child Caring and Cleaning. The Forms of Paid Work in Households. (Panie k deťom a na upratovanie. Podoby platenej práce v domácnosti.)* concentrates more on the intergenerational relationships in relation to the child care and household work. Using the ethnographic methods, the author describes the emerging market in this area in Slovakia, pointing at some specific features different from the situation in other European countries.

Finally, the pictures made by Alex Rotas present a way how to fight ageism through calling into question the idea that people are obliged or expected to behave in a certain way according to the ideas of the society connected to someone's age.

Contextualising the "brutal honesty of the sport" (Rotas, 2014: 6) with the stories of masters athletes she also challenges the notion that someone has got to be useful or young. The masters athletes do not look young, on the contrary, due to their life-long outdoor sporting their faces and bodies are often wrinkled. The alternative visual narrative presented by Rotas shows it is not necessary to look younger than we are when we age and we can still look wonderful. She made the photos in the hope they convey, what she has learnt "from these remarkable athletes, namely that we can, if we're lucky, be in our prime time at whatever age it is that we happen to be right now." (Rotas, 2014: cover)

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR AND GUEST EDITOR

Mgr. ĽUBICA VOĽANSKÁ, PhD is a research fellow at the Institute of Ethnology of the Slovak Academy of Sciences in Bratislava. She studied ethnology and history at Comenius University in Bratislava, the University of Regensburg and Vienna University. She holds a doctoral degree from the Institute of Ethnology of the Slovak Academy and Comenius University in Bratislava. In a long term perspective, she is dealing with the ethnological research of kinship and family, old age, intergenerational relations, (auto) biographical research and historical anthropology. She focuses mainly on the connection between the "big" history and the lives of individuals in the context of the social structures they are a part of. Her latest book *"V hlave tridsať, v krížoch sto". Starnutie v autobiografiách v Bratislave a Viedni* (*"Young minds, old bodies." Ageing in autobiographies from Bratislava and Vienna)* (2016) focuses on the old age and ageing in autobiographical texts in both cities. Please, find more information about the project participation and the list of publications on http://www.uet.sav.sk/?q=en/lubica-volanska-herzanova-mgr-phd.

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ARTICLES

IT WAS GREAT, THEY WERE ALL YOUNG! IS THERE AGEISM IN STUDENTS' REFLECTIONS ON PROFESSIONAL INTERNSHIP?

IVANA B. PETROVIĆ, SVETLANA ČIZMIĆ, MILICA VUKELIĆ

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Ivana B. Petrović, Ph.D., Associate Professor; Svetlana Čizmić, Ph.D. Professor; Milica Vukelić, Ph.D.; University of Belgrade, Faculty of Philosophy, Department of Psychology, 18-20 Čika Ljubina Street, Belgrade, Serbia; e-mail: ipetrovi@f.bg.ac.rs

Noting the tendency of students of work and organizational psychology to choose internships among a smaller number of hosting organizations paired with satisfaction with completed internship expressed by the sentence 'It was great, they were all young', we performed qualitative content analysis of students' reflections on age in the context of internship attractiveness. The materials for the analysis were 1) Fifty internship reports and 2) Discussions with students. There was no explicit ageism in students' reports. Students were equally satisfied with mentors from more and less popular organizations. Four categories related to attractiveness of internship hosting organizations emerged: organizational culture, organizational climate, working conditions and mentors' work. As in the case of more attractive organizations they point to 'younger' organizations, as a factor of their attractiveness, they could be discussed as 'clear manifestations of ageism', but also they could be regarded as 'younger generation centeredness', and partly a form of 'covert ageism'. Reflections could also be interpreted as a consequence of students' professional insecurity, need for peer support, ease of communicating with peers and those of similar age. Psychological distance from older generations of colleagues and mentors at work can both be the source of covert and overt ageism. In order to enable students to fully utilize the benefits of internship for their professional development, it is important to work on recognizing and preventing ageism and overcoming generational distances.

Key words: ageism, work and organizational psychology, professional internship, organizational attractiveness, young generation centeredness, Serbia

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Diversity at work is accepted as one of the common demands of contemporary organizations. It is considered to be beneficial both for the organization and employees at many levels (Cox & Blake, 1991). For the success of the professional

internship, it is important for students to be exposed to diversity at the organizational level. Diversity brings potential benefits for developing general competences such as decision-making and creative problem-solving that have been proved as valuable for organizational performance. It is also useful for developing professional competences that are embedded in internship mentors' tasks, experience and expertise. Different forms of diversity are challenging for different organizations. However, one of the widespread contemporary challenges comes from profound change in population age and an aging workforce.

Data suggest the employment rate of older workers, the age group 55–64, has been steadily rising from 2005 to 2017 throughout the European countries covered by Eurostat (Eurostat, 2018). Moreover, on the global level, in 2000, for every 10 persons of working age 15–64, there was one person of age 64 and older, whereas it was projected that in 2050 there will be one person 64 and over for every four of working age (Fraccaroli & Depolo, 2008). The trend of workforce ageing is not followed by wider acceptance of older employees. Negative attitudes towards older employees lead to their discrimination at work lowering their employability, increasing the risk of losing their job and difficulties in finding a new one (Fraccaroli, Depolo, Wang & Sverke, 2017). Ageism in general is a stereotype, prejudice and discrimination by an individual of certain age or one age group against other individuals or groups based on their age (Butler, 1969; World Health Organization, 2015). It is expected to be more noticeable in younger than in older people (Bodner, 2009). In society at large, ageism could be found at the level of an individual (e.g. avoiding contact with older people), institution (e.g. lack of care) and society (e.g. age segregation, patronizing language). Ageism can have overt and covert forms (Brownell, 2014). The Centre for Policy on Ageing (2009) defines overt age discrimination as open and observable (usually present at the institutional level) and covert age discrimination as hidden discriminatory actions (usually present at the individual level).

Various authors raise borders of old age and older workers at different points over the life course. In the second half of the twentieth century, the accepted marker of old age was put at 65, which was rather the economical and societal norm (Neugarten, 1974). The United Nations have not defined a standard numerical criterion, but the age of 60 years is an accepted limit for defining older population (World Health Organization, 2015). There is even more diversity in public perception of older employees (Taneva, Arnold & Nicolson, 2016). Moreover, as employees are getting older, their perception of older age and its boundaries changes, moves and expands. The extended lifespan and baby boomer generation retirement were strong impulses for insisting on finer differences among older people (North & Fiske, 2013). There are different kinds of discrimination oriented toward older persons that point to lack of homogeneity among them. Naming the group of people aged 55–75 as 'young-old', Neugarten (1974) described them as having large potential for being agents of social change, having solid health, good education, being relatively affluent, and being under less pressure from work-family balance. Usually people from this group that are still present in the labour market are perceived as some kind of threat to younger employees (North & Fiske, 2013).

The concept of generations refers to groups of people of similar age and who share similar life experience (Rudolph & Zacher, 2017). Though, chronologically defined generational categories are not without limitations, they represent a convenient heuristic for classifying and capturing the complexities of the current workforce and

their work-related experience (Nakai, 2015; Rudolph & Zacher, 2017). Thus, we can describe the contemporary workplace as highly defined by generational diversity with simultaneously present baby boom generation, generations X, Y (millennials) and Z (post-millennials, iGen). The most striking change is probably the succession of baby boomers by millennials which implies a noticeable change in attitudes, values, and work behaviour (Deal, Altman & Rogelberg, 2010). Research shows that millennials are significantly different from previous generations, mostly concerning higher self-esteem, assertiveness and narcissism. Millennials enter colleges in higher numbers comparing to previous generations, but their general knowledge is lower. Concerning the number of working hours, as well as work patterns, no differences were found. There is a widespread belief that millennials use technology significantly differently from the previous generation, but in essence they are more intensively and diversely connected.

A professional internship is a students' first structured experience with the world of work. For millennials it is also the first structured opportunity, outside of school and family life, to meet various generations and exchange knowledge and share experience with them. As much as being the process of entering an organization to learn, it is also the process of bringing generational specificities into the organization. These generational specificities could be exchanged in a structured way through the process of reverse mentoring (Chaudhuri & Ghosh, 2012), a process in which junior employees/interns are connected with more experienced employees to help them bridge the generational gap. These exchanges between two generations could be the platform for knowledge sharing, as well as a threat when it comes to developing and deepening some age-related prejudices and stereotypes.

In societies where the economy is characterized by low economic activity, hostile conditions on the job market and high unemployment rate, these generational 'meetings' could be even more threatening. The present study comes from Serbia, a country characterized by the unemployment rate of 18.2% among the population aged 15–64 (Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia, 2016); workers aged 15–24 as well as those 65 years and older are represented in the labour market with only 5%. It should be noted that the Serbian economy was characterized by GDP per capita that was among the bottom 6% in 2015, based on European Working Conditions Survey (Eurofound, 2016).

In this study, we want to explore ageism among students, future professionals, that are about to enter their professional fields. We explored the existence of ageism on the example of work and organizational psychology students in the context of their professional internship. Before presenting the research problem, we will briefly present professional internships as the wider context of our research.

PROFESSIONAL INTERNSHIP FOR WORK AND ORGANIZATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY STUDENTS

In the context of the Bologna process of developing a common European educational space, a set of European standards for the psychology profession has been developed (Bartram & Roe, 2005; Lunt, 2005; Lunt et al, 2005; Roe, 2002). Within these changes that were embraced by the University of Belgrade (Serbia), the professional internship for work and organizational psychology students was structured and adapted to meet

the needed standards. The students' professional internship is a compulsory component of the work and organizational psychology studies curriculum on both undergraduate and master level studies at the University of Belgrade (Faculty of Philosophy, Department of Psychology). The purpose of the internship program is to enable students to connect university acquired knowledge with professional practice under the supervision of a practicing work and organizational psychologist, on site mentor. Internships last for one working month at each level of studies. As students can take part in internships during the lectures period, they can agree with the on-site mentor to work part time, e.g. 20 hours per week. Students should carry out their internship within work organizations, human resources and consulting agencies.

Domains that are covered during the internship are chosen in each case among: personnel psychology and human resources management (staffing, recruitment, selection, psychometric and other assessments, performance management, selection interviews, training), career counselling and coaching, organizational psychology (organization design and structure, teamwork, organizational culture and climate, and organizational change and development, employee well-being, organizational surveys, organizational stress management and ergonomics intervention). If students have specific interests in consumer behaviour and marketing, they can take one part of their internship in an organizations' marketing department or market research and communication agencies where they should cover consumer psychology, consumer research, market research and marketing communications, also under the supervision of a psychologist. One of the important purposes of an internship is to get acquainted with the legal aspect of a psychologist's work. Also, the internship is an opportunity to have first-hand experience of ethical issues in practice. Eligible mentors on the internship are psychologists that practice work and organizational psychology on a full-time basis, with a minimum of three years of practitioner experience in the field and who passed all the exams needed for independent work in their field (such as state professional examination or the exam for working in employment services).

INTERNSHIP PROCESS

The internship process can be portrayed by four major steps. The first one is the preparatory phase in which there are one-on-one consultations with a faculty mentor to whom a student is assigned. These consultations include information about eligible organizations and mentors and preparation for the internship, as well as discussions about students' preferences and career goals. The second one includes finding an organization. In that phase students are encouraged to find the organization by themselves (with faculty mentor's support). If they do not succeed on their own, faculty mentors arrange the internship for them. If students carry out their internship in an organization with more than one eligible mentor, they are often in the position to choose the actual mentor. The last phase includes starting the process in which students actually start their internship.

Students' assignments on internship are the following: to learn, as much as possible, about the psychologist's work role by shadowing their organizational mentor, and helping the mentor in her/his everyday duties. Mentors are encouraged to give students as many individual assignments as possible and entrust them some tasks that they will closely supervise (e.g. to carry out the selection interview, to draft

a report). The mentor is required to provide face to face feedback to the student at least twice on the course of internship and also at the end of internship. The mentor is also required to write a report about the actual contents of the student's activities, on how the student performed during the internship, her/his observations of the student's work, engagement and advancement, as well as advice for further career development.

After the internship, the student is required to write a report, to present it and defend in front of the faculty mentor and other students. The evaluation is based on the quality of the report, as well as the quality of the presentation and defence, and organizational mentor's report. As the report defence is an important professional development step that depends on the students' well-structured and integrated reflections, it is essential that it takes place in the trusting and safe atmosphere in which students feel free to share their opinions openly.

RESEARCH PROBLEM

By reflecting and discussing our overall experience about work and organizational psychology students' internships, we noted the tendency of 'shrinking' of the active part of the base of internship mentors and hosting organizations. Namely, we noted that more students expressed interest in a smaller number of organizations. Some organizations started to become more attractive as internship hosts which could result in less variety in internship experience (in organizational setting, HR work, and psychologist's job) and could further lead to limited opportunities for knowledge sharing among students. When summarizing internship experience from more attractive organizations, one of the main and the most frequent students' impression was 'It was great, they were all young'. Thus, the aim of this study was to explore whether the rising attractiveness of some internship hosting organizations was a (c)overt manifestation of ageism or something else.

This problem is of a wider importance on, at least, two levels. On the level of work and organizational psychology profession, for managing human resources and organizational behaviour processes, work and organizational psychologists are important for defining organizational policies, processes and practices that are open and correct towards all ages. Work and organizational psychologists as well as other professions dealing with employees' wellbeing need to be wary of ageism at work. Otherwise, they could be part of overt, institutionalized ageism with far reaching consequences for all employees. On a wider level, the problem is highly relevant for students and younger people of different professions entering the world of work, as ageism could limit their professional prospects, such as the choice of organization, the choice of job and professional development at work.

METHOD

Procedure

In this research we have used archival educational materials. All the materials were previously anonymized with regard to students. We have kept the information about

the hosting organizations and mentors and included it in our analyses, but this information was taken out of the presented results as we also wanted the respect the anonymity of mentors and hosting organizations. The materials for the analysis were fifty internship reports from several generations of work and organizational psychology students (undergraduate and master level) that completed their studies in the period 2013–2017, at the Department of Psychology (Faculty of Philosophy, University of Belgrade). Also, we have analysed faculty mentors' notes and comments from the internship defence. The authors of this paper were in the role of faculty mentors. The authors together analysed all the materials.

Materials and analysis

The required content of the report is broadly defined, which gives space for student's personal expression and further analysis. Nevertheless, in the required structure of the report there are some topics that have to be covered under generally defined subtitles – organization (to present the organization in which they took their internship, e.g. history, structure, culture); the psychologist's job and role; activities which the student followed and took part in; in depth analysis of one chosen work and organizational topic/problem from the scientist/practitioner perspective; general reflections about the internship process (including their future professional development). This makes individual reports highly comparable.

For data analysis we have used qualitative content analysis (Flick, 2014). It is one of the widely used procedures for analysing and reducing diverse textual material (Bauer, 2000) applying categories. In our analysis, we tried to look for the similarities and recurring topics. There were two broader themes that have been in focus of the analysis: organizations and organizational mentors. Concerning the organizations, we have analysed the descriptions of their culture, values and climate. Regarding organizational mentors – we have analysed students' experiences and impressions about the mentors' work role and behaviours toward students (general mentorship style). These emerging topics and patterns were further enriched by analysing faculty mentors' notes. The professional content, as well as covered competencies and skills were not included in this analysis, because they were previously arranged for each internship.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The finding that we would like to list first is that we have not found overt indicators of ageism in students' reports. Age was not listed explicitly as a factor of popularity of internship mentor. It was also not listed as a factor of their internship experience, but there was still 'something in the air', less open, tacit expression of millennials' affinity in 'they were all young organizations'.

Predominantly students expressed high satisfaction with their organizational mentors, mainly based on their professionalism and openness for students. The sentence we could often hear: 'Most important was the opportunity to apply theoretical knowledge in practice', was shared excitement and gratitude to mentors regardless of their organizations. The experiences and impressions about mentors were rather coherent regardless of their employing organizations, their ownership,

size, economy sector, or whether their role could have been defined as internal organizational expert or external consultant. Thus we were looking for differences in students' experience related to hosting organizations. The strategy in organizing findings was to use two extreme groups of internship hosting organizations based on their attractiveness among students, i.e. more and less attractive organizations (Table 1). We could probably easily classify the majority of hosting organizations as moderately attractive, but it would blur the overall picture and would be less helpful in addressing the research problem.

Organization was the first topic in the analysed material. By analysing characteristics of organizations that students perceived as less attractive, we could conclude that they were mainly traditional, state-owned or in mixed ownership (with stronger state ownership). Employees' career in less attractive organizations could be defined as more traditional, stable and organization-tied (Čizmić & Petrović, 2015; Torrington, Hall & Taylor, 2008). These companies have a more diverse workforce concerning work experience and education (including more lower-level educated employees). There was more diversity among employees based on their age – they employed larger numbers of people aged 55 and older. Organizational mentors were usually older than 45 years. The organizational climate was often authoritarian, with stricter hierarchical structures in which it was difficult for students to find their way. The organizational climate was characterized by tension and stress that stemmed from a lack of resources, money, and bad organizational decisions. Communication was less open, indirect. The overall impression about students' reports from less attractive organizations was that they were stricter, more stereotypical and less vivid. Moreover, students did not express their personal impressions, engagement and enthusiasm. Some keywords that could be distinguished from the reports are: occasional clockwatching, salary-watching, retirement-watching, anti-corruption measures, organizational crisis, expected restructuring, privatization, forced retiring and possible loss of job. Maybe, the most colourful picture that represents less attractive organizations was that psychologists worked with paper files, and even in one case the psychologist had to use a mechanical typewriter. Working space was also traditional – less flexible, with older furniture and older equipment (even the lack of equipment).

Organizations that students perceived as more attractive gave an overall impression of modern organizations. In students' reports more attractive organizations were often described in terms of contemporary organizations. Based on our analysis, we found out that they were mostly privately owned and international. They often had clearly defined mission, vision and corporate values. An employees' career was more contemporary, i.e. dynamic, changeable, flexible (Čizmić & Petrović, 2015; Torrington, Hall & Taylor, 2008), and in constant movement (Arthur, Khapova & Wilderom, 2005). Thus, there was a higher fluctuation rate in more attractive organizations. The workforce was less diverse in relation to education, with the majority of employees having some university degree. Employees were predominantly younger, with top managers somewhat older, but not older than 55–60 years of age. The organizational mentor was usually younger than 45 years. Organizations were devoted to building a culture and climate of high performance, openness and support. Students experienced the communication in these organizations as more open and direct. The climate was dominated by fast pace, working under time pressure, work overload, longer work hours at some and strict working hours at some. Some keywords in

students' descriptions were: planning, excellence, quality assurance, competitive work environment, company brands, corporate social responsibility (CSR) and cross-functional teams, including more Anglicisms, English originating acronyms and organizational jargon. Maybe, the most vivid picture of more attractive organizations represents psychologists working with HR software, data base, international tests and other tools. The working space was also modern – flexible, open, with up to date equipment and furniture. Our overall impression was that students' reports from more attractive organizations were more personal, vivid, involved, and enthusiastic, with clearly expressed wish to work there ('I would be happy to return there'). They were in accord with the values of millennial generation (Deal, Altman & Rogelberg, 2010).

There were some of the students' insights that were common both for more and less attractive organizations. Students noted problems with space in all organizations – psychologists lack space that would enable the level of privacy needed for their work. Dress-code was also one of the issues that emerged in both groups of organizations. They could all come upon strictly defined dress-code or no dress-code both in more and less attractive organizations. The only difference was 'casual Friday' that was characteristic only of more attractive organizations.

Returning to mentors, students perceived them in both more and less attractive organizations as professional, respected and accepted among managers and employees in the entire organization, as well as among HR colleagues. However, there was a difference in sources of tension and stress depending on their employing organization. In less attractive organizations tension and stress came from the lack of resources, whereas, in more attractive organizations it was caused by time pressure and overload with work.

Table 1. *Illustrative quotes from students' reports about internship in more vs. less attractive organizations*

Less attractive organization	Attractive organization
Organizational culture	
'Organization with authoritarian culture, formal network of communications and relations.' 'Employees are simply expected to carry out their duties and follow superiors' orders' 'Strict hierarchical structure in which it is difficult for students to find their way.'	'Integrity, excellence, equality, transparency, respect for every individual, responsibility in using organizational resources.' 'Company brand is powerful and recognized all over the world.' 'Efficient and successful teamwork as an organizational value.' 'Strong identification with organization.' 'Organizational culture could be described as strictly defined, action oriented, with strictly defined procedures.'
Organizational climate	
'Organization stagnates and deteriorates.' 'Negative side – restructuring and downsizing that was not systematically carried out.' 'There is strong hierarchical structure... Interpersonal relationships among employees are not at a satisfactory level.'	'Organization highly values good interpersonal relations. Employees at all levels are ready for cooperation, they meet each other's needs, listen to each other, freely express suggestions, opinions and critiques. ... There is a strong emphasis on both work

Less attractive organization	Attractive organization
Organizational climate	
'Employees are not rewarded adequately. Atmosphere is not that good due to inadequate work motivation, higher level of tolerance for lack of order, various forms of high-handedness and lack of responsibility.' 'Employees use sick leave when they cannot carry out given tasks that are beyond their competencies.' 'I have worked in a friendly atmosphere.'	'Company invests in employees; they have an excellent maternity leave program. They have well developed prevention of discrimination.' 'Sources of satisfaction at work are possibilities for promotion, opportunities for developing experience, wide array of interesting work assignments and events.' 'They organize sports activities, employees can go for yoga, swimming, and other sports.' 'Colleagues' support at the beginning of the internship was of a tremendous help.' 'The thing that has completely impressed me was that I haven't felt for a single moment as a student on internship. On the contrary, all the colleagues treated me as their equal.' 'Students feel pleasant and they develop the feeling of belonging to the organization.' 'I worked in a friendly atmosphere, mostly relying on my mentor. I have learnt a lot from colleagues who were not psychologists.'
Working space, equipment	
'Lack of larger testing room and interview room' 'Everything is so old. They use a mechanical typewriter.'	'The open space was not personalized. The desks were clear. Only the CEO and legal department have separate offices.'
Mentors	
'Psychologist is constantly in a situation of being emotionally drained after numerous, repeated arguments with employees that are angry with some managerial decisions.' 'Feeling of fulfilment when psychologist sees that the intervention was helpful for an employee.' 'Positive atmosphere at work, good relationships and solidarity among colleagues are source of satisfaction for psychologists.' 'Psychologist' job is complex and highly responsible. It engages various competences and gives sense of professional fulfilment.' 'My mentor was kind and supportive; my internship was very useful experience.'	'Psychologist in HR is in charge of all dissatisfaction and employees' remarks and always available if they come upon a problem.' 'I have got invaluable experience, as well as trust of my mentors, so I have carried out many work activities without mentors' close supervision and continuous checking. This was a huge responsibility, and I am so grateful to my mentors for that opportunity.' 'Psychologist from HR department contributes a great deal to accomplishing companies goals.' 'When my mentor has some free time at work, she investigates new job market trends, new HR tools, and reads scientific papers from well-established journals.'

All things considered, identification with mentor and internship organization was based on values and behaviour patterns that were characteristic of millennials and younger generations (Deal, Altman & Rogelberg, 2010). Even in organizations in which there were some older employees, including psychologists aged 60 years and older, based on the informal and open climate, we could find 'they were all young' reaction. Even when they were of older age, mentors and employees were perceived as equals, as 'young'. Students felt more at ease to ask questions and expose their lack of knowledge and experience among mentors and colleagues whom they perceived as 'younger', i.e. more open, and closer. Students felt more and better accepted as a result of more intensive interaction with colleagues, spending with them not only time at work or during the lunch break, but also hanging out with them after work (that often happened in more attractive organizations). Students could easily find common language and topics with younger employees.

CONCLUSION

The main inspiration for this study came from one of the students' overall impressions about their professional internship: 'It was great! They were all young', that we have been hearing repeatedly like a 'broken record' from a number of students. Reflecting on our reactions to that, we came upon the dilemma of whether this was an open expression of ageism, covert ageism or something else.

First, it should be noted that we have not found explicit ageism in students' written reports. Students were equally satisfied with their mentors from various organizations, but there were visible differences in popularity of internship hosting organizations. When we dug deeper into the profiles of hosting organizations based on their attractiveness, a rather clear pattern emerged. Yes, there was 'something in the air'. Students wish to work for and their overall affinity for the fresh breeze coming from 'they were all young organizations' could be a sign of millennials' (less open expression of) ageism.

Analysing differences among more and less popular organizations based on their culture, climate and working space and equipment (Table 1), it unfolded that more popular organizations were perceived as more modern, polished, vivid, active, with a dynamic environment filled with business buzzwords, stressed with workload and time pressures, whereas less popular were perceived as more traditional, more authoritarian, more cautious, more passive and pressed with sharp existence problems. Mentors were perceived as equally devoted and supportive in both groups of organizations. However, perceived differences among mentors were defined by their organizational contexts. 'All were young' context was the one in which students could clearly see themselves professionally in the near future. Bearing in mind the specificities of millennials, their higher self-esteem, assertiveness and narcissism (Deal, Altman & Rogelberg, 2010), the presented findings could be regarded not only as a form of covert ageism, but partly also as 'young generation centeredness'. It is clear that these reflections could be interpreted as a consequence of students' professional insecurity and need for peer support they could more easily satisfy in the 'younger' organizational context characterized by ease of communicating in the fast changing work context and collaborating with peers and those of similar age. On the other hand, larger psychological distance from older

generations of employees and mentors at work can both be the source of covert and overt ageism.

Concerning applied research methodology, it is worth noting that ageism is a methodologically sensitive research topic, especially when it comes to exploring those expressing ageist attitudes. Although the applied research method that was based on a single approach, could have been enriched by intensive interviews and/or focus group discussions, it is highly questionable if application of these techniques could secure relevant and reliable data. In addition, it is more problematic when it comes to highly educated participants, aware of the negative aspects of expressing socially undesirable attitudes.

In conclusion, ageism as a broader, multifaceted social problem, intensified by demographic and workforce trends, demands a comprehensive approach and measures. If students perceive their professional development and future career in more attractive organizations, it is reasonable they want to acquire an internship experience in similar organizations. More attractive organizations are more suitable places to prepare for the modern career (Torrington, Hall & Taylor, 2008), and internship experience from them could help students to be more employable. On the other hand, thinking of work and organizational psychologists as a helping profession, as those who would professionally be in charge of securing all forms of organizational diversity and securing a discrimination free organization, a narrow professional internship experience could be less functional and valid.

However, the presented findings are relevant outside of the context of work and organizational psychology as a profession. Internship in all professional fields should support developing professional competences and ethics that at its core mean openness for all kinds of employees and organizational environments that are free from all sorts of 'isms'. In order to enable students to fully utilize the benefits of internship for their professional development, it is important to work on recognizing and preventing ageism and to overcome generational distances and fully appreciate collaborating with the spectrum of generations.

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS

IVANA B. PETROVIĆ – associate professor at the University of Belgrade, Faculty of Philosophy, Department of Psychology. Has more than 20 years of experience in university teaching, professional training, research and consulting – SMEs, major Serbian and international companies (various sectors), and non-profit organizations, worked for over 100 organizations. Areas of specialization: work psychology, human resources management, organizational research, consumer research, marketing communications, social marketing. Author of the book "Professional and ethical issues in the work psychology" and numerous research papers. President of the Red Cross of Serbia communications committee. Member of the COST Action on Ageism. Further information, RG profile https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Ivana_B_Petrovic

SVETLANA ČIZMIĆ – professor at the Department of Psychology, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Belgrade, Serbia. Has more than three decades of university teaching and research experience. Areas of specialization: work psychology, career development, human factor and ergonomics, stress and well-being at work, organizational psychology. Mentor of master and doctoral theses in the field of work and organizational psychology. Author and editor of a number of books and numerous papers in the field of work psychology. Member of the COST Action on Ageism. Further information, RG profile https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Svetlana_Cizmic

MILICA VUKELIĆ – a research associate at the Institute of Psychology, Department of Psychology, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Belgrade, Serbia. Her main topic of interest is work psychology, namely, workplace bullying and stress, career development, human factor and ergonomics, work engagement. She has published numerous research papers using both quantitative and qualitative approaches and worked as a researcher on many international research projects. Member of the COST Action on Ageism. Further information, RG profile https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Milica_Vukelic2

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ARTICLES

A CASE STUDY OF AGEISM IN POLITICAL DEBATES: ARE SOCIAL MEDIA A LATENT SOURCE OF GENERATIONAL HATRED?[1]

LUCIE VIDOVIĆOVÁ, MICHAELA HONELOVÁ

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Mgr. Lucie Vidovićová, PhD., Office for Population Studies, Faculty of Social Studies, Masaryk University (FSS MU) Brno, Joštova 10, 602 00 Brno, Czech Republic; e-mail: lucie.vidovic@seznam.cz; Mgr. Michaela Honelová, FSS MU Brno, Czech Republic; e-mail: michaelahonelova@seznam.cz

This paper discusses how negative stereotypes, cultural conflicts and tensions related to age and generational membership are used in election campaigns. The social media are presented here as a venue where the political values are discursively paired with age and generational membership and perpetuate risks of an increase in ageism and generational conflict in symbolic universes. It presents a case study of YouTube video political campaigning and Facebook site commentaries to draw a picture of negative connotations used to build the "we" versus "them" generational categories which may result in further deepening the ageist moods in Czech society. It further shows, how these discursive practices may influence the perception of intergenerational relations in our society, but it also argues that they may have only limited influence over the actual behaviour of both younger and older in elections and political representations. The conclusion calls for deeper understanding of connections between generational conflict, age, and voting behaviour.

Keywords: Intergenerational conflict, politics, social media, media, YouTube, Facebook, voting, elections, age, generations

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INTRODUCTION

Although it is not easy to quantify (Herlofson & Hagestad, 2011), there is a general belief that longer and somewhat healthier lives brought the historically unprecedented increase in the number of time overlapping generations in both families and societies, at least in the global North. Ageing of the population is considered to be a victory of humanity, providing the unprecedented opportunities of longer lives. However, it also gave rise to concerns about future developments and economical sustainability of (post)modern societies as a consequence of "burden of too many older people to care for", "too few" children for the national renewal and "too few" economically active persons to provide for both of these presumably dependent groups. The concerns, paradoxically oriented towards today's older generations instead of towards seniors of the future, not only spill over fiscal policies, public spending, and welfare debates but touch a big share of general political debates as well. Here they materialise in fears from older people being too numerous and too powerful. The "grey power" debate on the issue of (possibility of) increased unwanted influence of rising numbers of older people on the policy making via voting rights and gerontocracy (Guérin & Tavillot, 2017; Kotlikoff & Burns, 2004; Sinn & Uebelmesser, 2003), or by active ageing policies (Hess, Nauman & Steinkopf, 2017) could be stated here as an example. As a result, we may observe "the cultural animus against people on the basis of their years", as Achenbaum (2010: 30) describes the very core of ageism, spreading over the public discourses. These ageist anxieties are based on disregard of the diversity of older people, their values, needs and preferences, and should be therefore deconstructed and exposed as potentially harmful and socially dysfunctional.

In this paper, we present a case study illustrating how the social media present negative stereotypes, cultural conflicts and tensions in election campaigns, how they monetize, the generational debate over political values and behaviours, and how these are embedded in ageist language and attitudes, possibly reinforcing the ageism prevalence in the Czech society. We discuss the three short YouTube videos issued on the eve of the pre-election political campaigns in 2013, 2017, and 2018 with the declared goal of activating the younger generation to become more involved in the political arena dominated by the higher older voters' turnout in all levels of elections.

We follow not only the messages conveyed by the videos as such, but mainly the interpretations attached to them by authors and external commentators representing various public stakeholders. The case is represented by age/cohort/generation conflict of ageist origin, connecting the age, cohort or generation with perceived political values, standpoints, and criticism expressed in Facebook group commentaries. We look at age, cohort or generationally related political and social engagement evaluations expressed in posts as a representation of the values and attitudes held by the commentators and publicly displayed with the aim of being shared, seen, and commented on by others. We argue that this material can add to our knowledge on how social media can potentially influence and strengthen intergenerational conflict via the real-world events in the political disputes.

AGEISM, GENERATIONAL CONFLICT, AND AGE INTERESTS IN POLITICS –POINT OF DEPARTURE

Ageism, defined as "an ideology based on a shared belief in the qualitative inequality of various stages of the human life cycle, manifested through a process of systematic, symbolic and real stereotyping and discrimination against individuals or groups based on their chronological age and/or their affiliation with a particular cohort and/or generation" (Vidovićová, 2008: 113) is believed to have several and interwoven sources in micro, mezzo and macro structures. The media in general and social media in particular are recognised as a platform where minorities and socially excluded groups including older people are underrepresented (Vasil & Wass, 1993) and where stereotypes and oversimplifications about old age and older people are often present (Nelson, 2004; Vickers, 2007; Levy et al., 2014; Kroon et al., 2018). The more positive view on social media as a platform for presenting alternative realities of old age and making use of the new social media in favour of older people are much scarcer (Oró-Piqueras & Marques, 2017; O'Rourke et al., 2011).

The media are perceived as a specific case because they are a platform where stereotypes can live and be replicated, be both source and perpetuators. Media have physical structures and feature identifiable social actors, authors, editors, owners, advertisers, readers, and consumers of the media content, who may to a greater or lesser extent play a role in the ageist discourse's production, maintenance, or deconstruction. But there are other important sources of ageism which do not have such tangible structures. Intergenerational conflicts and intergenerational wars are example of these (North & Fiske, 2013; Ayalon & Tesch-Römer, 2018). The intergenerational conflict theory is one of the meso level theories trying to explain the origins of ageism in the society: if the society has only a limited amount of scarce resources and prestigious roles available, such as jobs available or roles related to executive or political power, and if they are allocated and acquired based on age criteria or generational allegiance, age or generation rivalry may arise. In such a situation, disadvantaged groups are instigated to claiming more power, and privileged groups answer with stronger efforts to protect their privileges. The clash becomes ideological (Vidovićová, 2008). As a result both symbolic and real conflicts between generations and/or age groups may arise. On the symbolic levels the (social) media and intergenerational conflict as sources for ageism meet (cf. Petrášová, 2010).

The generational conflict may be motivated by generational inequalities (Preston, 1984; Thomson, 1989) affecting a general debate on the future of welfare states under the condition of ageing populations (cf. Binstock, 2010 for the debate overview). The dispute over the scarce resources raises questions of whether the state can sustain the rising costs of pensions and healthcare provision (Attias-Donfut & Arber, 2000) and how should different resources be prioritised between the various social groups covered by different policies (Bengton et al., 2002; Bonoli & Häusermann, 2009; Brunner & Balsdon, 2004; Epple, Roman & Sieg, 2011; van Oorschot, Arts & Halman, 2005; Suitor & Pillemer, 1988). The majority of the decisions made in these areas are subject to political representations and political values and stands. Part of these disputes are based on the "mentality of scarcity" holding that the public policies and goods are finite and support of one (i.e. older) group will inevitably leave the other (i.e. younger) group harmed (cf. Cattaneo & Wolter, 2009). The political power represented by votes and interests is counted here as well. The theories further hold

that people exercise individual motivations in their policy and political preferences, and their choices are driven by their generational interests and values (Iversen & Soskice, 2001; Huddy, Jones & Chard, 2001; Logan & Spitze, 1995).[2] Typically, older voters are believed to be more conservative with inclination to left-wing parties, reflecting their early political socialization during the Communist regime (Linek, 2008), while young voters are often underrepresented in the active voting groups (Linek, 2011, 2013). As epitomized by a recent article title in a similar context: "Too young to have an opinion, too old to innovate".[3]

The notions of an older generation being powerful, because of numerous and disciplined voters, yet too much looking back, dwelling on the past and hindering the needed development puts them into the position of those who stand in the way of progress and better, because different, future. Their political views can be used as a tool for distinction between not only two competing political views (left vs right) but also two generational groups themselves (old vs young). Each group is symbolically and discursively assigned a political stand or a typical action (or non-action in the case of the younger generation) and is expected to act as a "typified representation" of those particular views and/or actions. The description of an example of how these processes are constructed, presented and reproduced through social media will be presented in the following sections.

METHODS USED

In the following part of the text we will present a case study of three distinct yet related events in campaigns 2013 and 2017 general elections, and 2018 presidential elections in the Czech Republic. These examples help us to understand particular features of intergenerational conflicts' discursive construction, mirroring the social practices and structures of socio-political contexts, thematising both politics and age and politics and generations, displaying the ageist language and pointing, both directly and indirectly, to generational conflict as a war over resources and political power. We use a mixed method integrative approach to draw the picture of how the

2 Results of empirical studies trying to find an answer to the question whether there is or isn't a generational war over different resources are indecisive (Fullerton & Dixon, 2010). The research findings can be divided into three main groups. The first group consists of studies that have found some evidence of intergenerational conflict reflecting significant differences in preferences as to how the welfare state should operate. They found that the life stage of a given individual will be an important predictor of his or her preferences. But the results differ not only by generations but tend to be culturally specific and vary across countries as well (Busemeyer, Goerres & Weschle, 2009). The second group of studies looks at specific types of policies, such as educational policies, over which generational conflicts may occur. However, these results do not provide clear assurances of their assumptions without attention to other variables (Ladd & Murray, 2001). The third group of studies denies the existence of the intergenerational conflict in their conclusions (Attias-Donfut & Arber, 2000; Emery, 2012; Guérin & Tavoillot, 2017). Esping-Andersen and Sarasa (2002) or Silverstein et al. (2000) talk about the so-called new generational conflicts that renew the power and social functionality of particular (age) ideologies. The fight for scarce goods in post-material, post-industrial societies continues, changing only the shape or form of such goods (Petrusek, 2006), such as prestigious jobs, political offices etc.

3 Source: https://www.campaignlive.co.uk/article/young-opinion-old-innovate-lifting-lid-ageism-advertising/1463016 (Accessed 24.5.2018)

chosen discourses reproduce and/or resist social and political inequality (Angermuller, 2014; Woodak & Meyer, 2009). We rely on publicly available social media production, such as YouTube videos, news, commentaries, blogs and Facebook feeds as a data source. These were identified by the keyword searches in Google search and the media archive of Newton Media featuring the title of the respective video. The numerical results are given below and in footnotes where relevant. The four main examples (YouTube´s Persuade your grandma, Your first time, Generation with opinion, and Lumpencafé on Facebook) were chosen on the line of the snowball evolving from the top featured video. Further, we take advantage of analysis of the survey Ageism 2012 to describe the perception of the message and its age-based differentiations in the Czech adult population.[4]

THE CASE: PERSUADE YOUR GRANDMA, YOUR FIRST TIME, GENERATION WITH OPINION, AND LUMPENCAFÉ ON FACEBOOK

Persuade your grandma

It will not be an over exaggeration to claim that it all started with the pre-election video directed by Petr Zelenka, called "Persuade your grandma,"[5] which has become a cultural icon of intergenerational conflict debates from 2010 onwards.[6] The almost four minute long video spot was uploaded on April 22nd, 2010 on the web movie platform YouTube. The overall idea and script is a direct (some even claim "stolen", Kupka, 2010), but culturally fitted quotation of influential Sara Silverman's YouTube video, trying to convince the young Jews to persuade their grandparents "living in Florida" to vote for president Obama.[7] The protagonists of the CZ clip, young actors Jiří Mádl (*1986) and Marta Issová (*1981), standing in a retro-style furnished living room with a brown sofa open the video with the question: "*If you know that you can*

4 For the assessment of the perception of the video "Persuade your grandma" we use analysis of representative survey Ageism 2012. The survey field work was conducted by the Focus – Centre for Social and Marketing Analysis in the form of standardised personal interviews with the support of computer (CAPI) in respondents' homes. The respondents were selected using quotas to reflect the age, gender, education, size of place of residence and region composition of the Czech adult population aged 18 to 80 years. In total 1640 interviews were available for further analysis. The survey is based on previous studies described elsewhere (Vidovićová, 2008), however the issue addressed here was not previously followed and we present unique analysis of this particular data here. We present two-dimensional descriptive analysis which sufficiently supports purposes of this study.

5 Originally: Přemluv bábu. The Czech expression "bába" is a slightly negatively connotation variant of a "babička" - the grandmother, granny.

6 The debates over generational conflict in the social media have risen even before. Already in April 13th Petrášová (2010) covered in the news feed on the very prominent portal iDnes the existence of the Facebook (FB) group called „Jejich revírem je Kaufland, jejich tempo je vražedné – důchodci!". The title is parody on the opening in the German TV series Cobra 11 and the group, with around 330 thousand members, featured commentaries on how older people stay in the way in the public transport or in the supermarkets, but included also some very harsh commentaries like "Kill them all. Gang on them!". The referral to Schirrmacher's (2005) notion of generational wars are quoted here as one possible scenario of future development. As this FB group itself had many members and was also present in the public debates outside the FB platform, it could be that it has in some way prepared the field for the events to come with the Persuade your grandma video. However, as it does not feature the political line of argument, we took it out of our analysis here.

7 Available from: https://youtu.be/AgHHX9R4Qtk; Published on Sep 25, 2008; 2,349,943 views as May 2018.

change the destiny of this country by visiting your grandparents, would you drive over to visit them? Of course, you would! Unless you are total... (peep sound)". Subsequently the video features various symbolic visual and linguistic shortcuts, addressing young viewers, urging them to discourage their grandparents from voting the left-wing parties with emphasis on the communist party: "*because if in the next elections the left wing wins it will be the fault of the old people because these are the people who vote the left and that could be people from your family ... and they usually live in the countryside, how is that possible?! ... have they forgotten how this country looked like during the 40 years under the Communist ruling?... well older people have selective memory, they remember their first kiss but not the process with Milada Horáková* (note: a victim executed in politically motivated process with the communist party opponents in 1950's) ..." (0:32–0:56).

As of May 2018, the "Persuade your grandma" video has over 890 000 YouTube views, almost 2 000 mentions in the newspapers and TV or radio broadcastings, and the Google search generates more than 55 200 results.[8] The video clip was broadcasted and/or covered in news pieces by most of the printed and audio-visual national media, gaining also high visibility in general public discussions.[9] Even after two years more than a quarter of the respondents of the Ageism 2012 study were able to comment on the content of the video: 11% of the respondents remembered seeing the whole clip, a further 7% saw it at least partially, and 9% did not remember seeing the clip, but recalled its content. There is an obvious age gradient, with 33 % of those recalling the video in the age group 18–29 years, 28 % of those in their forties and fifties, and only 15% in the age group 70–80 years old. However, taking into account the time difference between the first appearance of the video online and the survey, and the fact that only about 35 % of those in the 65+ age group are active users of the Internet (Český statistický úřad, 2017), this is quite remarkable penetration of the cultural product into the consciousness of the population.

The messages conveyed by the content of the video were at least ambiguous, as the protagonists later said: we knew we were "on the edge", but they thought of the hyperbole and edgy humour as purposeful.[10] The important point to be made here is that the main target of the irony and sarcasm were not the seniors, but the left-wing parties and the legacy of Communist party. The authors point out series of harm done by the communist party during their ruling, older voters are being criticised "only" for "having the selective memory". However, the massive critic, by some commentators called "an avalanche" that followed the streaming of the video concentrated on the age and generational aspects, rather than on the political

8 It should be noted that both penetration of the Internet use, as well as the social media usage, which typically generate the quantity of impact of particular piece, was probably below today's levels.

9 In the first 30 days, the Newton media archive recorded 500 news pieces mentioning the title of the video, in May 2018 the count was almost 2000 in total. Marek Prchal, member of the production team and the author of the political campaign of the last election winner party "ANO", claims that this was the most popular viral video of 2010 and gained about 30 million CZK (approx. 1,2 mil EUR) of media space worth in the follow up coverage. (Source: https://www.slideshare.net/marek_prchal/premluv-babu; accessed: 12.5.2018).

10 The final part of the video features a "promise" to those who will take on the action, underling the hyperbolic discursive features: "we will tell you where to find on the Internet the very best and totally free animal anal porno video featuring the female member of the Italian parliament, Rocco Siffredi and eel" (3:39–3:53).

messages. The video was labelled by various public stakeholders, including celebrities, politicians, NGO representatives, academics and other opinion leaders as *gerontophobic*, *ageist*, *pathetic*, *stupid*, *primitive*, *vulgar*, *and tasteless*. (Česká televize 24, 2010a; Blogy a Názory, 2010; Deník Referendum, 2010). The political scientist Jiří Pehe, one of the first commentators of the video for national television, talks about social-Darwinist nature of the video message: "*... when I saw it, I was a little bit horrified. There is the right of everyone to engage politically. It is, of course, totally fine, to slightly exaggerate. But unfortunately, the clip struck me with its social Darwinism, with its approach to the old people. ...*"*You are an old lost generation, so do something for us, a young right-wing generation – it seems a little out of place,*" says Pehe. *...First of all, the fact that the whole left is thrown into one bag is a basic problem. And the second problem is that I find it vulgar when young people who were barely born before 89 want to explain to the old people who lived in it, how they had mess up these forty years and become lazy*." (Česká televize 24, 2010b)

We do not have any data reflecting the general public opinion which would be collected immediately during these events, but from the Ageism 2012 survey, it seems that perception of the video content slightly differed from the medialized selective pool of opinion leaders (see Table 1).

Table 1. Perception of the Clip "Persuade your grandma" by its Audience (in %)

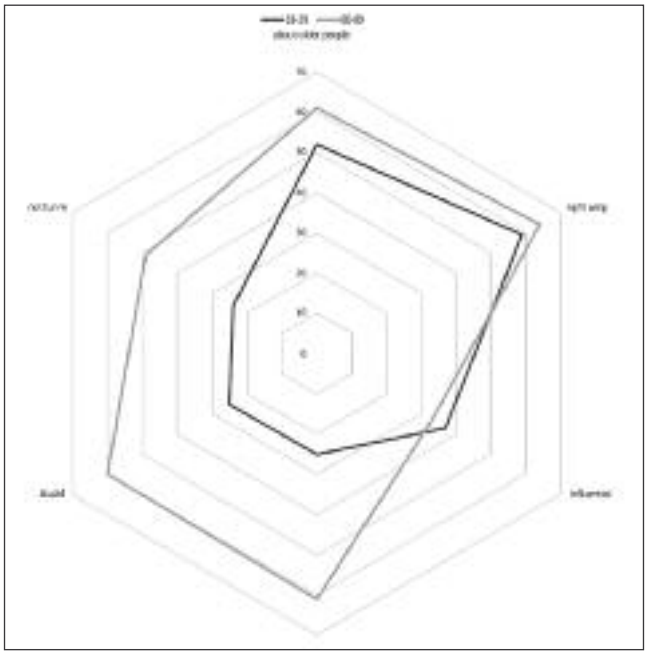
	Grades 1+2	Grade 3	Grades 4+5	
about youth	19	29	52	about seniors
smart	28	31	41	stupid
funny	40	22	39	no joke
influential	36	38	26	insignificant
right-wing	64	31	5	left-wing
helpful	27	33	40	harmful

Question: "I have here on the card several pairs of words and I ask you to tell me the number that you think best describes the contents of the clip." Items in the questionnaire were rotated.

Four to five out of ten respondents perceived the content as being right wing, about older people, stupid, not funny and harmful, which closely copies the media discourse present in the follow up coverage. However, these evaluations are not unanimous as quite a large share of respondents chose the middle, more neutral or indecisive category, or even went for more positive stands. Taken together, these two variants actually represent a majority of the answers. The agreement with the opinion leaders was reached in attitude that it was rather about older people (52%), or both generations (29%), less so about younger generation, which was meant to be addressed by the original script. If we compare the 18–29 age group attitudes with the 60–80 year olds, they both agree that it was a politically right-wing clip, in other aspects, however, seniors are much more critical. The younger group of respondents were slightly more convinced of its social significance (influential), and they perceived it less as a testimony about seniors, they understood this video was talking "to them" by higher share of recorded answers. We find these results quite interesting in the way they illustrate how one message can be variably "read" by different age groups, and we argue that the follow up negative framing of the video in the print media and on television has significantly produced the "ageist" perception of the

discourse; something, which was not present in the video as such. We may even hypothesise that the "media hysteria" could have been prevented with an alternative interpretation, for example, if the clip was presented and framed as a "call for intergenerational dialogue." Instead, it was and still is until today supporting the negative effects related to panic from demography and grey power critique.

Figure 1. Perception of the Content of the Clip According to the Age of the Respondent – Edge Ages (in%)



The influence of the Persuade your grandma (hereinafter PG-video) has decreased but is not really diminishing. First, it has shown that "these things work", i.e. such agenda setting spins attention and, gets further coverage and at the same time the age is a meaningful characteristic and generational membership can be mobilised for political purposes even in the younger generations and first-time voters (i.e. people aged 18 and older).

None of the campaigns that followed from 2010 onwards was missing a kind of disclaimer "we are not Persuade your grandma, we are different", trying both to distance themselves from the PG-video, and yet capitalise its previous success in both the online and offline world. The avalanche of critique aimed at the Persuade your grandma has made followers also slightly more cautious. The direct references to right wing, or any other specific preferences for that matter, as well as references to generational differences has become less pronounced in these later youth voter campaigns. However, it does not mean they have really disappeared.

Your first time

The YouTube campaign "Your first time!" (Tvoje poprvé!) featuring a selection of young Czech celebrities was issued in 2017 by the Political Marketing initiative. The visual aspects were inspired by the US initiative "Important. Save the day. Vote"[11] with the following rationale: *"The Czech political parties are not paying attention to the young people in the campaign because this group does not vote very often, and it is more interesting for the parties to focus on older people. The elections are also for young people and therefore we have chosen to positively motivate the generation of the youngest voters,"* says co-author of the project Alžběta Králová from the Institute of Political Marketing (Zwrtková, 2017). Králová in this quote makes an indirect statement towards the Persuade your grandma, by stressing the "positive motivation" aspect, while both the headlines and the body of the text by Zwrtková (2017) make the direct reference, seeing this (and probably any other future initiative) as a direct PG-video follow up: "*The Persuade your grandma is back. Klus, Mišík and other celebrities urge juniors to go to elections*"[12]. The script of the video makes indirect references to the start of a sexual relationship ("your first time") by providing answers on an unspoken question "how did it feel?". In one particular point one of the male celebrities says: "*I was surprised by the number of old age pensioners present*" (0:36).

Generation with an opinion

Similarly, in 2018 a pre-election video "Generation with an Opinion" (Generace s názorem) was streamed. Prominent influencers of younger generations, such as actors, athletes, singers and YouTubers were once again encouraging young people to think about the current political situation and cast their votes in the Presidential elections. The clip has 1.1 million YouTube views, 19,117 people shared the clip and the clip range is 1.8 million people.

This campaign was initiated by four students with the rationale to impress upon their generation (Facebook, 2018b). The authors claimed to be motivated to produce this video by the situation during the presidential election in 2013, where 58% of people aged 19–29 did not come to vote, while this share was "only" 36% in older age groups (Median, 2013). The urge employed in this particular video was built around the argument that "*if you don't vote, somebody else will decide about you, and you may not like it*". While this could be already understood as a hint about possible conflict of interests between the generations, more direct reference is presented in an "explanatory" statement that follows: *"It is something like you are getting a tattoo, but you let your grandmother to choose it."* (0:19–0:22) on which the actors shake their heads disapprovingly.

Facebook group "Lumpenkavárna"

The impact of such rhetoric can be followed on social media platforms, which have already been identified as a semantic space of negative symbols of old age and ageing

11 Available from: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nRp1CK_X_Yw uploaded 21.9.2016; 8 505 913 views by May 2018. Notably, the US initiative makes no claims related to age or youth, but the issues of race is mentioned on two occasions.

12 Available from: https://www.seznamzpravy.cz/clanek/premluv-babu-se-vraci-klus-misik-a-dalsi- zpevaci-premlouvaji-v-klipu-juniory-aby-sli-volit-38210; Original video was uploaded 9.10.2017; 17 924 views by May 2018.

(North & Fiske, 2012). The "Prague Café" label as a symbol of right wing sympathisers and intellectuals is often referred to by members of the Facebook group called "Lumpenkavárna" (Lumpencafé). The group has 35 thousand members and represents a rather coherent social group with a clear political agenda featuring many debates related to current political events (Facebook, 2018a). The Presidential elections in 2018 were only the second presidential election in modern Czech history based on a direct vote from the people, so the individual dis-likes as well as individual characteristics of the candidates, including their age, were frequently aired and commented upon on Facebook.

Just before the elections, from the 1st of December to 31st of December 2017 we found only seventeen posts featuring the keyword "senior(s)" in the Lumpencafé commentaries.[13] At least eight in ten contributions were pointing to older people as voters of Mr. Miloš Zeman, which was perceived as a choice worthy of criticism or even disgust for the members of this group, who declare to follow the legacy of former president Vaclav Havel as a high moral and intellectual standard. In the following month, where both rounds of the election took place, the frequency as well as the negativity of comments rose. In January 2018 the number of commentaries featuring the search key word "senior(s)" multiplied almost seven times and can be separated into three general types. In more than half of the 54 commentaries found, negative attitudes and comments were explicitly present. Words such as "*evil*" („zlo") or the label "*silly old people*" („naivní starší lidé") were used on several times. The comments were mocking older people for their votes for Miloš Zeman (ex-leader of Czech Social Democratic Party and prime minister in 1998 – 2002) as a vote for the hero and symbol of their youth. Older people were discursively homogenised in these comments by claims that this particular candidate is *their only possibility they see*. To a lesser extent, other contributors (28%) were expressing the stand that older people "*know what to do*", supporting the older voters' choices on their behalf (cf. the criticism of Persuade your grandma as being inappropriately instructive, which echoes here). Only 19% of the contributions were published by older members of the group themselves, taking a strong stand with pronounced agency defending the older people as a group, as those who are *not all silly, have own opinion and know more about the situation in society than younger people* (again, the echo of the "Generation with an opinion" video argumentation can be traced here). An interesting example can be taken from Mrs. Z. I. – a greyed hair lady's commentary in the group: "*Please do not write and not speak of me as Mr. Zeman's voter. I am part of a group of seniors, whether I like it or not!! I am a pensioner and I will not vote for Zeman. Not because he … is drinking alcohol and smokes but because he cheats … and pulls us to the East. He is a very bad example for anyone (not only for children). The vote for him is the worst thing! I will vote for Mr. Horáček because he is courageous, determined and hardworking. He is willing to sacrifice his property (a great rarity in our country) … for everything that has enriched us so far (his musical composition). He knows we*

13 The word search in the commentaries in a particular FB group is limited. There were 211 commentaries visible to us, but according to the administrators over five thousand comments were posted in this period. This discrepancy can of course have influence on the numerical results we have obtained. However, we hypothesise that the linguistic tools used, and negative connotations encountered may be a stable feature. After all, our view of the discussion may be a simulation of "an average" user or group member and his/her experience.

have to be in the bundle in which we are, otherwise, we are only "a cane in the wind". (Facebook, 7. 1. 2018a – "Lumpenkavárna")

Her account illustrates several lines of the argument: firstly she is not distancing herself from the "old age group", she is not a pro-age activist either (*whether I like it or not*), but she does not take on the potentially ageist approach of dismantling her old age status, rather she confirms it twice by referring to the socioeconomic status of old age pensioner. Secondly, she makes a very strong case for pointing to other commentators' incorrect evaluations: when you say something about older people you are talking about me as well (discouraging the in-group/out-group distancing), but I do not fit into your homogenising, stereotypical expectations about older people's behaviour (i.e. voting for Mr. Zeman). Thirdly, she provides an explanation of her political preferences as not being based on age of the candidates (as it was often the case and would be expected in an age-sympathy vote within age-in-group) or their personal lifestyle, but to be rooted in her genuine political values (right wing, "not to be pulled to the East"). The Facebook was here therefore used as a useful platform for the expression of the agentic position along several lines important for this social actor. This post by Mrs. Z. I. we argue, was provoked as a reaction to a previous action, i.e. repeated and long-term push to both directly and indirectly present older people as "them", "distinct from the young", implying their "unfavourable" political opinions and actions, usurping and almost stealing the political space for themselves.

There was considerable social and financial capital and know how invested in the production of the videos and in its maintenance in the media spotlight for a considerably long period (Prchal, 2011). The victimised group, if we apply this point of view, has only limited possibilities how to counteract such massive agenda. The majority of the reactions we found in the related materials brought to our attention by the online search, were given "on behalf" of older people, not by older people themselves. The two or three attempts to fight back by the same means, e.g. YouTube videos featuring older people and making direct references to the original spot as ("Persuade Jirka, persuade Marta" or "Persuade Grandma. The Green party"[14]), were not even closely as successful as the original, having on average 40 thousand views (i.e. 5 % of the original). However, it has also become clear that age is indeed a relevant characteristic for the political debates in the social media arena for many social actors and therefore, the ageism may flourish on their soil. The indirectness of the messages of the latter videos in comparison to PG-video have somehow decreased the level of follow up reactions, however, one should still ask if they are that much different. While their scripts to some extent employ different strategies (persuade older people not to vote for the left-wing parties vs. participate in the elections), the latter, subtle messages use the discursive power of the PG-video to build up on its marketing power. The fact that is done by openly distancing itself from it makes the case, in our view, even stronger.

14 Accesible from: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pfVd3IgkZ4E&t=1s, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6ghvkK_Ijxc

DISCUSSION

Case studies help to single out and explore actual phenomena in depth in their context of real life (Mareš, 2015; Yin, 2009). The strength of case analysis is in the possibility to enhance our understanding of other similar cases (Hendl, 2005; Mareš, 2015). In the picture we have drawn above we have shown examples of how the social media discourses thematise the age and generation groups as owners of homogeneous political stands which may get into conflict over the scarce resource of electoral victory, resulting in presenting older people as conservative, backward thinking, nostalgic, not being able to orient themselves in the today's world and selfish in their votes, which should be preferably overtaken by masses of activated younger generations.

Indeed, age, birth cohort and generation membership can be associated with particular tendencies in terms of political preferences, but the political attitudes as well as voting behaviour will be dependent on many other aspects beyond plain chronology, including education, socioeconomic status, place of residence, gender, the type of elections and others. As a result, old age pensioners (in Czech language frequent synonym for older people) are not a big monolithic "civilian army of voters" (Binstock, 2010; Walker, 1996), rather they tend to differ in economic and social status, race, gender, ethnicity, religion, education, marital status and other characteristics, which may have the same or even stronger power in explaining the political preferences than generational membership (Sinn & Uebelmesser, 2003; Binstock, 2010; Persson & Tabellini, 2000; Phillipson, 1996).

In the context of the Czech Republic the prevalent idea that older people are rather conservative and leftist is based on relatively higher preferences for the parties like Czechoslovak Social Democracy Party (ČSSD) and Communist Party (KSČ) in higher age cohorts, reflecting their early political socialization in times of communist ruling since 1948. According to the 2017 voting model proposed by Median (2017), these two parties were to be chosen by 34% of those in age group 55–64 and 32% of those aged 65+, but only 16 % of those in 35–44 age group and 25–34 age group, decreasing to negligible 4% in the youngest eligible voters (18–24) in the last parliamentary elections. However, the same information could be presented in a way that the majority, 70 per cent of people aged 55 and older voted for other than these leftist parties. These figures give us confidence to say that to talk about older people as left wing parties voters has the quality of an overgeneralising stereotype. Our argument is further supported by the fact that there is more than four times higher preference of young voters aged 18–24, as opposed to those aged 65+, for the controversial Party of Direct Democracy (Strana přímé demokracie – SPD) which has not been scrutinised either by public or by media. So it is the higher age of the individual combined with his/her left wing political stand which sets the media agenda and therefore may support the animosity between age groups or generations in political debates. The generations in these debates are often personified by (unintentional, internalised) disregard for internal heterogeneity between members of a particular generation and overstressing the societal general formative processes present during the formative periods of any given birth cohort and resulting common features or tendencies. These processes enable the use of the "we" vs. "them" distinctions to the point of latent conflicts, fully expressing the ageism in Achenbaum's (2010) understanding quoted above.

Further, different groups can have altruistic or selfish motives, but that does not necessarily predetermine the results and impact of their behaviour. For example, Huddy, Jones, and Chard (2001) argue that the long-term personal interest of the younger generation in secure retirement will be reflected in increased pension income also for the present generations of older people. Older generations may, on the other hand be motivated to vote in favour of the policies that they believe will secure the future of their children and grandchildren, regardless of the immanent impact over their own generation. So the logic of generational vote could be scrutinised from both a political and topical perspective, as the age/cohort/generation may be a weak predictor of either.

In a previous study, we have shown, that about 54% of the Czech adult population agrees with the statement, that people older than 60 years should be not take any political office (Vidovićová, 2008: 172), which is a not only age discriminatory but also violates the very basic principles of democracy. The both elections in 2013 and 2018 were normatively perceived as a "clash" between various dualities: young and old, between Prague as a cultural and intellectual centre ("Prague café") and "rural Czechs", between education and backward thinking. The actual impact of social media on the electoral results is now being widely discussed in the social sciences (Lasorsa, 1992; Hunt & Gentzkow, 2017; Sharma & Parma, 2016; Social Media Club, 2017), but it seems clear that the videos we have pointed out here are directly and rather successfully building the generational identity on principles of favourable in-group and negative out-group identities, instead of a more cooperative approach of mutual complementing of skills, experiences, and values, or as Biggs and Lowenstein call it, of "a generational intelligence" (Biggs & Lowenstein, 2011).

The generational conflict seeded in these social media representations here, is not harming only older generations. The young are subject to homogenisation as well, as the actors of these campaigns are indirectly implying and expecting the young votes significantly differ from those of their parents and grandparents, which in reality is often not the case. Also, results of surveys after the last Presidential elections in 2018 showed that the education, not the age was decisive, although in each age group with a different outcome: "*Milos Zeman had great support especially among people over 50 without a General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) … Mr. Drahoš defeated Zeman among the 50-year-olds with a GCSE. Among the older higher educated people their positions were balanced*" and quite surprisingly after seeing all the effort the young celebrities and YouTube´s influencers put into mobilising of the younger generation, analysts in Median (2018) claim: "*Milos Zeman's support increased especially among younger people without (GCSE). Milos Zeman managed to mobilize this most passive group for participation and support*." (Median, 2018). In short, voting behaviour may be, at least to some extent, a function of age, but political preferences are more a function of education and socio-economic status. This is the fact the young voters tend to disregard, overstating the expected and perceived role of the chronological age, and therefore, confirming the relevance of such debates for discussions on ageism and related age discrimination issues.

Throughout the text we used the term "generations" in rather classical understanding of Mannheim's (1952), who uses the concept as, at least partially, overlapping with the "cohort", i.e. people born in a particular time period and ageing in given chronological order (Attias-Donfut, Arber, 2000; Kertzer, 1983; Pilcher, 1994). This, like class, locates individuals socially and opens up certain possibilities and

experiences while shutting down others. Generational units provide self-conscious awareness of group identity, but not all generations have a particular style to be associated with. Often, generations come to be associated with political movements or develop in reaction to events or previous generations (Pickard, 2016: 203). Mannheim highlighted the role of class, place, and other cultural and social characteristics in shaping generational units, however, Pickard (2016) continues, "the complexity of this original position tends to get lost in many media representations (and popular views) ... Indeed, whilst stressing the difference *between* generations it over-stresses similarities *within* them" (Pickard, 2016: 204). The hundreds of thousands of likes and shares of the online contents may be impressive but seems to do very little in addressing these issues in more age-inclusive ways. Future studies should be going into depths of conveyed meanings and try to access the level of impact such messages have on actual behaviour in the political arena.

CONCLUSION

There is an ongoing discussion in what areas intergenerational conflicts are the strongest, under which circumstances the conflict is becoming a war, and who are the aggressors and who are the victims, and for the matter of fact, if they are real or only a methodological artefact (Fullerton & Dixon, 2010). According to recent results of the European Quality of Life Survey by Eurofound (2016), the Czech Republic has above average levels of perceived conflict among old and young people, especially in older and in the youngest respondents. Based on our case study we argue that social media and presentation of pro-youth electoral videos are feeding into it. According to Eurobarometer (2009), the majority of Czechs believe that individual age groups cannot easily agree on what is the best for their society (65 %), "because there will be the higher number of older voters, political decision making will pay less attention to the needs of young people" (47%). Phelan (2018: 561) confirms that "ageism is constructed and legitimised in relation to its condition of possibility in discourse (and)... (media) mediate the social production of valid knowledge. Furthermore, discourse has consequences; it does not occur in an ideological vacuum but permeates societal attitudes, professional practice, policy and legislation and thus, is fundamental to the perpetuation of hegemonic interests." Interestingly enough, six in ten respondents in this survey seem to perceive that "the media are exaggerating the risk of conflict between generations". It is an important conclusion, that the social media discursive campaigns may be filtered through personal experiences with positive intergenerational relationships.

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS

LUCIE VIDOVIĆOVÁ – is a sociologist. Her long-term research interests include sociology of ageing, social exclusion, environmental gerontology, age discrimination, and active ageing. She is also involved in research projects in the field of family and social policy. She conducts research for national as well as European bodies and works as a consultant on a number of implementation projects. Lucie also cooperates with different governmental and NGO bodies in the field of senior advocacy. Recent projects she has been involved in include surveys of age discrimination (www.ageismus.cz), ageing in big cities and rural areas (http://starnuti.fss.muni.cz), older consumers, anti-ageing, and the issue of role overload in active ageing grandparents (http://ups.fss.muni.cz).

MICHAELA HONELOVÁ – is a PhD student of Sociology at the Faculty of Social Studies of Masaryk University. The title of her master thesis was "Youth from the Box: Anti-Ageing Narratives in the Beauty Professionals' Practices". She holds a Master's degree in Sociology. Besides the interests of the sociology of ageing and discourse of anti-ageing, Michaela is also interested in gender issues in contemporary society.

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THE USE OF A DRAWING TOOL TO ASSESS THE IMPLICIT AGEISM OF STUDENTS

LOREDANA IVAN, IOANA SCHIAU, CORINA BUZOIANU

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Loredana Ivan, Associate Professor, National University of Political Studies and Public Administration (SNSPA), Communication Department, Bucharest, Romania, Expozitiei, 30A, 012104 Bucharest; e-mail: loredana.ivan@comunicare.ro; Ioana Schiau, National University of Political Studies and Public Administration (SNSPA), Communication Department, Bucharest, Romania; Corina Buzoianu, National University of Political Studies and Public Administration (SNSPA), Communication Department, Bucharest, Romania

Ageism has been generally defined as a prejudice people from a certain age group hold towards other age groups (Butler, 1969; 1975). Although such definitions do not restrict the use of the term to researching prejudices regarding a certain age group, currently ageism is deployed in studies concerning prejudices regarding older people and includes cognitive evaluations (negative stereotypes people might have regarding older people) as well as affective – emotional reactions towards older people, in different instances of daily life. Researchers admit the fact that some of the ageist reactions (both cognitive and emotional) could be captured by implicit measures. Implicit association tests have been used to measure subtle cues of ageism (see Levy & Banaji, 2002) and the validity of these measurements are largely discussed in the international psychological literature (see Greenwald, McGhee & Schwartz, 1998; Rudman et al., 1999, for a review). Drawing could also be used as a tool to research implicit ageism, though it has been approached to a lesser extend to research on ageism (see for example Barrett & Cantwell, 2007). In the current research, we employ the drawing technique on a sample of undergraduate students from a public university (N=165) to assess their visual representations of older people. Examining the features of the drawing allows us to talk about implicit ageism and the way the drawing tool could be a valid tool to examine implicit ageism.

Key words: Implicit Ageism; Using Drawing Technique to Research Ageism; Students' ageism, Visual representation of old age

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STEREOTYPE ABOUT OLDER PEOPLE

When measuring attitudes of young or middle-aged adults towards the elderly, people showed an ambivalent stereotype consisting of both positive and negative attributes (Chasteen, Schwarz & Park, 2002). Starting from the observation that people rate different social groups on competence and warmth, Fiske and collaborators (2002) have found that older people are evaluated as rather incompetent and warm persons, often patronized for the association between lack of competence and explicit warmth. Moreover, older people are viewed as having low status and being non-competitive. Also, compared to younger people, older ones are viewed as friendlier but less ambitious, and less responsible. Regardless of their gender, older people are seen as more feminine than masculine (Cuddy, Norton & Fiske, 2005). They are also seen as less competent in the workplace, even though there are studies showing higher competences of older workers in comparison to the younger ones (for a review see McCann & Giles, 2002).

Such an ambivalent stereotype (warm-incompetence) is to be found in general on groups with perceived frailty, as for example disabled people or house wives (see Cuddy, Norton & Fiske, 2005). In this respect, the stereotypes of older persons are, generally speaking, more negative than those of young or middle age adults, though research studies found evidence for both negative and positive attributes in the attitudes towards elderly.

Furthermore, the above mentioned stereotype of ageing is pervasive. The ambivalent stereotype of older people being more warm than competent is found in several cultures and crosses national boundaries (Cuddy et al., 2009). It is a largely shared stereotype by people from both collectivist (e.g. East Asia countries) and individualist countries (USA and Western countries are typical examples in the literature). Researchers have expected to find such a stereotype to a lesser extent in the more collectivist countries, for example due to Confucianism in the East Asian Countries that values respect for older people and parental authority (Sung, 2001). Still, younger adults from China, Taiwan or Thailand showed even more negative attitudes towards older people than people from the USA in large scale surveys (see Cuddy, Norton & Fiske, 2005). For example, in a cross-cultural study (Cuddy et al., 2009) on college students from Belgium, Costa Rica, Hong Kong, Japan, Israel, and South Korea, in all countries participants viewed older people as more warm than competent and in the three collectivist countries – Hong Kong, Japan and South Korea – this pattern was stronger than in the individualist countries. Thus we can talk about pan-ageism or cross cultural ageism, even though ageism was considered a Western term (Angus & Reeve, 2006; Nelson, 2011). The general mixed evaluative stereotype of older people also reflects changes in the Eastern cultures: these countries became more immersed in the Western individualistic values, more attached to capitalist value and less inclined to maintain generational reciprocity (Eyetsemitan et al., 2003).

Nevertheless ambivalent stereotypes, as the association between higher warmth and lower competence in the case of older people, are rather persistent (Cuddy, Norton & Fiske, 2005). This mixed stereotype usually resists change; whenever an older person shows competence, he/she will automatically lose in terms of perceived warmth, so that the effort of increasing competence may backfire by decreasing evaluated warmth. Therefore we can talk about prejudices when evaluating older people: they elicit pity and sometimes pity accompanied by admiration (they are seen

as survivors of the traditional world – Cuddy & Fiske, 2002). For example, in the study conducted by Fiske and collaborators (2002) college students expressed pity as an emotion elicited by older people; pity was mentioned 79% more often in connection with older people than for other evaluated groups. Although admiration was the second emotion listed by college students in connection with old people, admiration was not accompanied by envy or contempt – which are emotions that normally accompanied the feelings of admiration.

There is evidence that older people also internalized the content of age stereotypes and we are facing a phenomenon of self-fulfilling prophecy (Scholl & Sabat, 2008). It is not only younger and middle-aged people who share their views on older people and experience pity in connection with their age group; older adults themselves have internalized this message, showing less trust in their competency in some areas typically associated with younger people (e.g.: technology – see for example Ivan & Schiau, 2016). This creates self-induced dependence and helplessness (Nussbaum et al., 2005) and can "push" older people in a cooperative and friendly role (consistent with the stereotype) to preserve a positive self-identity. For example, when interviewing older women regarding their use of Facebook (Ivan & Hebblethwaite, 2016), we revealed the fact that they tend to present themselves as grandmothers, as this was a role with a positive connotation in society.

EXPLICIT AND IMPLICIT AGEISM

The term *ageism*, first systematically described by Butler (1969), basically refers to prejudice of one age group towards another age group. Ageism has been primarily used to describe prejudice and discrimination towards old people (Oswick & Rosenthal, 2001).

When discussing negative stereotype towards old people we consider the cognitive component of ageism. Similarly the affective reactions (prejudice) elicited by old people reflect the emotional component of ageism. The two components translate into behaviours (discrimination). We agree with Cuddy, Fiske and Glick (2004) that people who are perceived as friendly and warm, but less competent elicit help from others and are potentially socially excluded. Although help is a positive behaviour, in the long term it can generate dependency or resistance. Often older people refuse different charity activities or feel offended. Another type of behavioural ageism is social exclusion and neglect, as a consequence of perceived incompetency. Social exclusion takes various forms, from the exclusion of old workers on the labour market, to disregarded opinions in medical settings and overmedication, or avoidances and social isolation.

Normally, ageism has been assessed by explicit measures: self-reported evaluations in the form of scales and survey-based questionnaires. In this way people were asked to report their explicit attitudes towards older people (Krosnick, Judd & Wittenbrink, 2005). Data about people's views on older people described above are indications of their explicit attitudes. However, when measuring people's explicit attitudes, study participants become aware of their reactions towards the person/group which is the object of evaluation. This poses an important limitation, especially when there is a social norm inhibiting the expression of negative attitudes towards the target group (Rudman et al., 1999). We could wonder whether people are honest in their evaluations

and to which extent they want to disclose their attitudes (Greenwald, Nosek & Banaji, 2003). We believe that attitudes towards old people could be a typical example where measuring explicit attitudes is a limitation (see also Greenwald et al., 2009).

Furthermore, the current literature admits the value of implicit attitudes and implicit stereotypes – attitudes people are not aware they are expressing during a required task (Greenwald & Banaji, 1995). In this way, implicit attitudes are defined as being out of the individual's control and un-intended: "implicit attitudes are manifest as actions or judgments that are under the control of automatically activated evaluation, without the performer's awareness of that causation" (Greenwald, McGhee & Schwartz, 1998: 1464). Consequently, implicit measurements are deployed to investigate implicit attitudes – measurements that activate people's attitudes without the respondent being aware of it, or able to conceal it. Studies on implicit attitudes (see Levy & Banaji, 2002 for a review) have shown that: (1) implicit attitudes influence explicit attitudes and behaviour, therefore their role is not to be neglected; (2) implicit attitudes do not overlap with explicit ones and peoples' attitudes towards target groups could differ when implicit and explicit measurements are employed. Thus researchers (Greenwald, McGhee & Schwartz, 1998) talk about *dissociation* between implicit and explicit attitudes; (3) implicit stereotypes are far more negative that the explicit ones, especially when there are strong societal norms against expressing negative stereotypes about certain groups.

Implicit racism and sexism are the most investigated implicit attitudes towards social groups (Ottaway, Hayden & Oakes, 2001; Cunningham, Preacher & Banaji, 2001; Nosek, Banaji & Greenwald, 2002), but implicit age stereotypes have been assessed as well (Bennett & Gaines, 2010; Levy, 2003; Levy, Ashman, Dror, 2000). The term "implicit ageism" has been used to describe the automatic use of stereotypes towards old people (Levy & Banaji, 2002). The results show the prominence of implicit ageism over the explicit ageism, meaning that implicit attitudes towards old people are far more negative than the explicit ones. Also, implicit ageism is consistent across the life span and does not show significant variation with age. This means that older people have internalized negative attitudes towards their own age group and elicit the same negative evaluations, particularly when implicit measurements are used (Greenwald & Farnham, 2000). Also, these studies show that implicit and explicit ageism are interplayed and mutually reinforced, and influence not only the way older people think or interact with other age groups, but also their health and well-being (Levy & Banaji, 2002). For example, when older people were exposed to implicit ageism (through priming), they showed changes in their manner of walking, and walked more slowly compared with the situation in which they were not exposed to implicit stereotypical clues (Chopik & Giasson, 2017). We are probably facing a level of saturation, during their life span, of the repetitive exposure to such negative cues associated with old people, to such an extent than the behaviour consistent with the stereotype is automatic and unwittingly activated.

USING DRAWING TOOLS TO EVALUATE PEOPLE'S VIEWS OF OLDER PEOPLE

When investigating implicit attitudes, researchers have used implicit measurements. In most of the cases, Implicit Association Tests (IAT) (Greenwald, McGhee & Schwartz, 1998; Greenwald, & Banaji, 2017) have been used, seeking automatically elicited

attitudes, or using priming procedures to measure automatic affective reactions (see Greenwald, McGhee & Schwartz, 1998). The IAT tests comprise of a procedure in which participants involuntarily associate a target concept (e.g. being old) with an attribute dimension. In the first step, target concept discrimination occurs, or the initial discrimination – for example people are asked to distinguish between old and young faces. This initial discrimination is performed by asking participants to use, for example, their left hand for a type of answer and the right hand for the other type of answer. Then, people are asked to make rapid responses when they categorise stimuli from the two target groups (e.g. old and young people) on different bi-polar attributes (e.g. Likeable and Unlikeable) using the same procedure (their left hand for one type of answer and the right hand for the other type of answer). The response times are calculated in a computer-administered setting and the latency of responses relative to baselines are considered an indicator for implicit stereotypes. IAT starts from the assumption that respondents react faster on association which is common to them, as for example young-likeable; old-unlikeable and react slower on the association that is not mentally associated with the target group, and consequently not that common to them.

IAT procedure has also been used to assess implicit ageism. For example, in a research study conducted on university students, IAT has been used to measure their implicit attitudes towards older workers versus younger workers. The results of this particular study show that implicit attitudes towards older workers, particularly older women, were far more negative than explicit attitudes, which were to a greater degree influenced by social norms and impression management. Also, the study revealed no association between the implicit and explicit attitudes measured, providing evidence for the *dissociation* process discussed by Levy and Banaji (2002).

Although IAT is considered the most reliable and accurate procedure to measure implicit attitudes (Perugini, 2005; Greenwald et al., 2009), other indirect measurements have been implemented as well, in the attempt to reveal implicit cognitions, especially in the area of prejudice (see Greenwald & Banaji, 2017 for a review). In some cases, nonverbal cues (such as social distance and eye contact) have been used to describe people's implicit attitudes (see Word, Zanna & Cooper, 1974; Dovidio, Kawakami & Gaertner, 2002); or lost-letter technique (Milgram, 1969; Cialdini & Baumann, 1981) – aiming to investigate the tendency of people to send letters as a result of their attitudes towards different target groups/organizations.

Although the use of drawing tools is indicated in the literature as a reliable technique to study attitudes and prejudice especially in classrooms, few studies that we know about have employed drawing tools to study ageism (Barrett & Cantwell 2007; Falchikov, 1990; Lichtenstein et al., 2005). In Falchikov (1990) for example, a small group of children (N=28) aged 10 to 11 years, was asked by their teacher to draw a young man, a young woman, an old man and an old woman, with no further indications. All children performed the drawings and the items were analysed using a content analysis technique, intended for use in testing mental abilities (DAP, Draw-a Person), developed by Goodenough (1926) and refined by Harris (1961). DAP is a standardized measure, coming with instruction for administration and scoring that was adapted in the study of Falchikov (1990) to assess children's attitudes of older persons. The results show the fact that children hold negative stereotypical images of older people, particularly of older men. Loneliness, difficulty to walk (especially in the case of older men) and other signs of physical degradations were present in the children's sketches. Still, this

study does not claim to study children's implicit attitudes. The only study we know about, in which authors aim to study implicit attitudes towards old people using drawing tools, is the one conducted by Barrett & Cantwell (2007). Note that in this study the term "implicit ageism" was not used. Data collected on a relatively large sample of undergraduate students (N=183) consisted of drawings of older people. Students were asked to draw a picture of an older person, during an undergraduate course of *Aging and the Life course*, with no further indications. Subsequently, the drawings were analysed using a flexible methodology and techniques of content analysis. The data collection was not followed by interviews with the students, but the authors conducted class discussions to gain insight about the choices made when drawing an old person. The results are consistent with the ones found in the literature when studying implicit ageism: ambivalent stereotypes consisting of positive and negative attributes are found in the content of the sketches. Among the negative attributes: impairment, impotence, ugliness and isolation are the ones depicted in the students' drawings. Also older men were more negatively represented in comparison with older women – who were more often associated with positive attributes related to being a grandmother: kindness and interest in cooking. Though this research study did not compare students' implicit attitudes with their explicit attitudes towards older people, the fact that one third of the sketches showed walking problems, and that in one fourth of them the facial expression of the older people were indeterminate, could indicate that students' implicit attitudes towards older people are more negative than the ones resulting from other studies in which college students were explicitly asked about their views about older persons (see for example Cuddy, Norton & Fiske, 2005). Also, this study shows that ageism and sexism interact in the implicit views students hold about old people: older women elicited less negative implicit reactions than older men. Still, students were more inclined to draw men than to draw women when they were asked to draw an old person (see also Lichtenstein et al., 2005 – with similar findings). This in itself could be an indicator of implicit ageism, as older men elicited more negative reactions than older women.

CURRENT STUDY

In the current study, we started from the findings of Barrett & Cantwell (2007) and argue that drawing tools are valid approaches to study implicit ageism, not only in children, but also in adults.

The data presented in the current paper represents the first stage of a two-stage research project, namely a qualitative-quantitative analysis of drawings made by students and depicting old people. The second step will consist of conducting semi-structured interviews with the study participants, to understand their motivations for depicting older adults in a certain way. The results will be presented in a subsequent article.

By asking people to draw sketches, giving them few indications about the content or guidelines (e.g. what to draw), we open a window to their automatic cognitive processes and their immediate emotional reactions. The current research aims to answer the following research questions:

(RQ1) What characteristics of older people do students choose to draw, when they are openly asked to visually represent an old person?

(RQ2) Could we employ drawings to reveal implicit ageism? If so, what would be the limits and advantages of using drawings to access implicit attitudes?

We depart from the standardized procedure of DAP (Draw-a-Person), implemented by Falchikov (1990) and we did not specifically ask people to draw a young person (woman and man) and an old person (woman and man) – a situation in which respondents become aware of the evaluation process asked from them. Instead, we employed a more flexible procedure in which respondents were asked to sketch rapidly things that come to their mind, with no preoccupation about the style of the quality of the drawings. It is true that drawing tools access partially implicit ageism by conveying meaning of our stereotypes or prejudices and one can hardly say that people (especially adults) do not control their reactions and are not aware of what they draw (as in the IAT procedure). Still, drawing tools allow access to subtle cues and latent aspects of people's attitudes, and this might offer the possibility to more deeply explore their attitudes and convey their implicit nature.

Method

The study was designed to explore visual representations of old age and implicit ageism by means of analysing drawings made by Romanian undergraduate students. We used content analysis of the students' drawings of old people in order to investigate how participants picture old age, and to reveal features of implicit ageism. A mixed qualitative-quantitative approach was used to code the visual content and group the data into categories. Content analysis techniques of the drawings have been previously used to investigate stereotypes of old age (Falchikov, 1990; Levy & Banaji, 2002; Barrett & Cantwell, 2007). As documented in the existing literature, drawings could be useful in exploring implicit ageism, as participants express their thoughts about old people in an unusual manner.

Participants

A total of 165 first year undergraduate students enrolled in the College of Communication and Public Relations participated in the study. The participants were mostly women, reflecting the structure of the student body for this study program; 37 participants were men, 111 were women, and 17 students did not report their gender. The group was highly homogenous in terms of age. The mean age of participants was 19 (SD=.65).

Procedure

In a class setting, the students were asked to *draw an old person*. The students were asked to complete the task in 10 minutes. Participants were given no additional information about the characteristics of the drawing but were asked to include a title for the drawing, and to write down the sex and age for both themselves and for the old person that they drew (whether the person they drew was male of female and how old they think the person is). No other preparatory training was conducted. Students were asked to volunteer for this task and did not receive any incentive for it.

Treatment of data

A content analysis of the drawings was conducted, and the principal characteristics of all the drawings were noted. Data was coded considering several variables: height of the drawing (in centimetres), age and gender of both the drawer and the drawn old person, titles that students had suggested for their drawings, the presence of a grandfather/grandmother role – from the title, elements that indicate loneliness or difficulties, elements that indicate successful ageing, clear positive or negative attributes, facial expressions. Titles were re-coded according to the main themes emerging, using two independent coders from the research team. Inter-coder reliability was calculated (Kalpha=.84) in order to assure a good reliability of the variables.

RESULTS

Ageing and Gender

Out of the 165 drawings obtained, 83 were drawings of older men and 82 drawings of older women. There was a visible inclination for the students to draw an older person of their own gender. Out of the 37 men in the sample, 84% drew older men, while 16% drew older women. Comparably, out of the 111 women in the sample, 61% drew older women, while 39% drew older men; though the preference for drawing an older person of their own gender is prevalent in the group of women, the data also shows the female students were more inclined than the male students to depict members of the opposite sex.

The students were asked to indicate the age of the old person they were asked to draw. The indicated ages ranged from 40 to 84, with the mean age being 65.87 (SD=8.59).

Titles

The titles the students chose for their drawings we re-coded according to the main themes emerging. The categories of titles that resulted are as follows: *titles that identified the drawn person as a grandparent* (for example: "my grandfather", "a grandmother"), *titles that mentioned themes of difficulty, loneliness or frailty* (for example: "the old man with a cane", "the woman with a short leg", "loneliness", "the upset old retired man"), *titles that focused on positive aspects* (for example: "smiling little old lady", "glad granny"), *titles that showed elements of successful ageing* (for example: "age is just a number", "stylish little old lady on the bus", "fashionable old man"), *titles that focused primarily on the drawn person being old, or mentioned the passage of time, changes brought by time* etc. (for example: "changing years", "the years leave their mark", "old man"), and *titles that used diminutives* (for example: "the little old woman in the park", "little old lady") – these categories were treated as non-exclusive – for example, the title "stylish little old lady on the bus" is, at the same time, suggestive of ideas of successful ageing, and also uses a diminutive.

Table 1 – Percentages of different types of titles attributed to the drawings, by gender of the drawn person

Types of titles	Men (N=83)	Women (N=82)	Total (N=165)
Grandparent role	7%	28%	18%
Difficulty, loneliness or frailty	11%	5%	8%
Positive aspects	25%	12%	19%
Successful ageing	20%	17%	21%
Diminutives	0%	13%	7%

Diminutives were used in 7% of the total drawings, but were, in fact, only used for women. Out of the 82 drawings of women, 11 (13%) had diminutives in the title, while none of the drawings depicting men were described with diminutives. Conducting a cross-tabulation, the data revealed that, out of the 11 diminutives used to describe women, these were twice used in connection with scenarios of successful ageing (for example: "stylish little old lady on the bus"), six times connected with being a grandmother (for example: "granny out shopping"), and four times combined with positive attributes (for example: "smiling little old lady").

Identifying the drawn older person as a grandparent occurred for 18% of the drawings, and was significantly more frequent in the case of women (28%) rather than men (7%) – $t(129, df=15)= -3.61$, $p =.00$.

Titles suggestive of scenarios of successful ageing were present in 21% of all the drawings; 17% of the drawings depicting older women were found to fit in the successful ageism framework, as were 20% of the drawings showing men, but the difference is not significant.

THE HEIGHT OF THE DRAWINGS

The height of drawings ranged from 3 to 29 centimetres. Most drawings were between 11–15 centimetres (33%) and between 16–20 centimetres (and 32%); 4% were between 0–5 centimetres, 17% between 6–10 centimetres, 12% between 21–25, 2% between 26–30 centimetres. The overall mean size of all the drawings was 16.41 centimetres (SD=6.34), with no significant difference in the sizes of the old women (mean height=17.20, SD=6.45) and old men drawn (mean height=15.45, SD=6.37). However, the types of drawings ranged, students drawing one of three: a full-body depiction, only heads, or upper bodies only (full torso or part of a torso). Therefore, sizes must be analysed according to these three types of depictions.

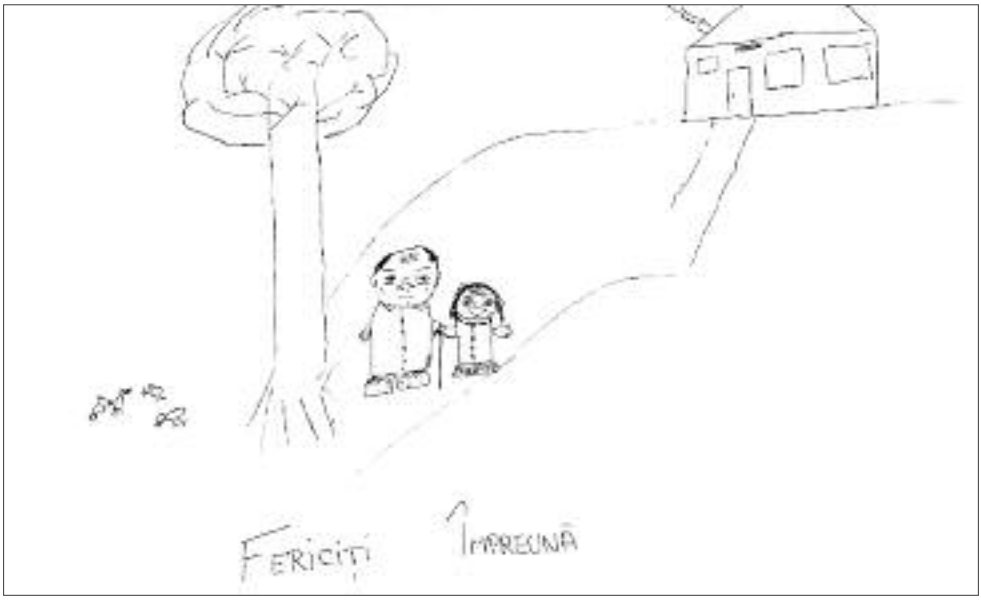
In the case of the 31 drawings that only depicted faces, 21 showed old men (mean size=14.12, SD=6.40), and 10 depicted old women (mean size=16.15, SD=4.57). Though that data suggests that, on average, the size of the old women drawn is bigger than that of the men, the difference is not statistically significant. We can only speculate about the students' decision to draw more men, rather than women, as heads only. Future studies should employ a follow-up discussion with students about their perceived reasoning behind the drawings, and the body parts they chose to depict.

In the case of drawings that only depicted upper bodies, 20 drawings were of men (mean height=16.50, SD=8.47), and 29 showed women (mean height=20.78, SD=7.36). The gender difference in height is not statistically significant.

In the case of drawings that depict the whole human figure, the distribution was equal, as was the height of the drawn old people: 42 were older men (mean height =15.61, SD=5.15) and 43 were older women (mean height=15.03, SD=5.08). The gender difference in height is not statistically significant.

There are only two drawings in which older adult couples are depicted, and in both cases the women are smaller than the men, by an average of 4.5 centimetres (Figure 1). Previous studies that have employed a drawing-based analysis have discussed the relevance of the sizes of drawn characters (see Falchikov, 1990), where figures depicted as more important are drawn bigger than others.

Figure 1. Visual representations of old age: old couple



NEGATIVE STEREOTYPES ABOUT OLD AGE

Facial Expressions

One aspect we can look at, to analyse the way older adults are presented and to seek signs of implicit ageism, is the facial expressions that the students drew for them. When looking at the presence of smiles, they were clearly more frequently present in the drawings of women – 40% of women were depicted as smiling, while only 23% of men were drawn with smiles (Table 2). This difference proved to be statistically significant – $t(158, df=15) = -2.45$, $p = .01$). The female student participants drew more smiles (33) than the male students did (19). Most drawings showed faces with neutral expressions or expressions that were difficult to decipher (71% of men and 54% of women) while negative facial expressions, such as frowns or "upside down smiles", were very infrequent (6% of men and 7% of women). These finding are in line with previous studies that employed a similar drawing-based methodology to assess student representations of older adults (Barrett & Cantwell, 2007).

Table 2 - Percentage of facial expressions of emotions displayed per gender

	Men (N=83)	Women (N=82)	Total (N=165)
Facial Expressions			
Smiling	23%	40%	32%
Neutral	71%	54%	61%
Negative (sad/angry)	6%	7%	7%

Wrinkles, Glasses and Walking Sticks

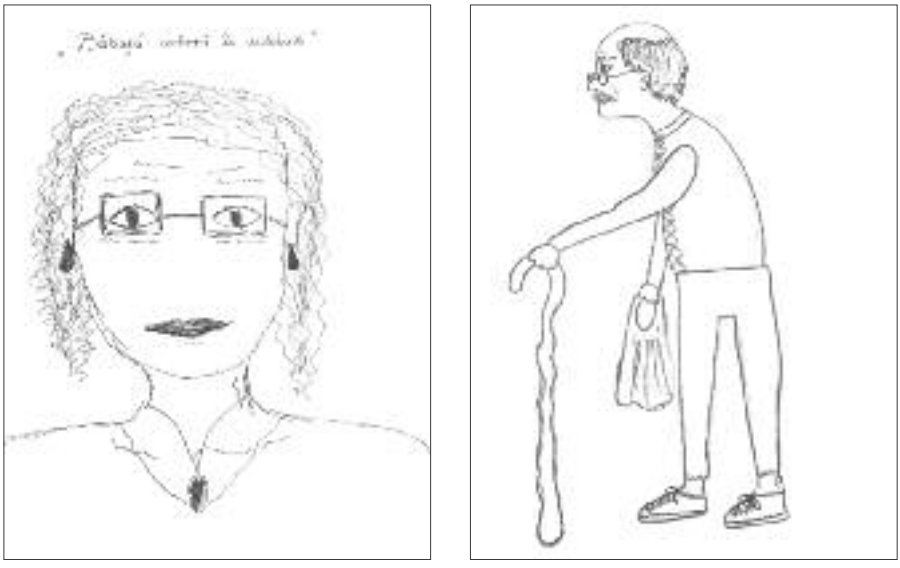
Other characteristics that emerged from the drawings and were related to stereotypical items associated with old age that suggest a deterioration of health, such as glasses, wrinkles and walking aids, canes/walking sticks (Figure 2).

Table 3 – Percentage of stereotypical attributes of old age that suggest deterioration of health

	Men (N=83)	Women (N=82)	Total (N=165)
Walking stick	36%	24%	30%
Glasses	33%	40%	36%
Wrinkles	76%	83%	79%

Wrinkles were the most frequently recurring characteristic, irrespective of age, with 79% of all drawings presenting facial wrinkles. They appeared more often in the drawings that showed women, but the gender difference was not statistically significant. A high proportion of the drawn older adults were featured wearing glasses (36%) and using walking sticks (30%). The drawings of older women contained fewer walking sticks and more glasses, but the differences were not statistically significant.

Figure 2. Visual representations of old age: wrinkles, glasses and walking sticks



Stereotypical Activities

Figure 3. Visual representations of old age: Stereotypical activities

Though statistically negligible, there were several pictures depicting men performing retirement-specific activities, such as walking in parks or large outdoor spaces. Several of the women were depicted doing grocery shopping or carrying utility-type bags (such as shopping bags, returning from the market – 13%) or in the presence of food (8%), suggesting both a nurturing side to the old women in the drawings, and a gender-specific stereotype (Figure 3). In contrast, several of the older men were drawn as smoking or drinking (5%). Only three drawings showed older adults with other people (in two of the cases, with a life partner, and once with a grandchild). There were also two drawings that showed older adults with pets – an old man walking a dog, and an old woman with a cat. The fact that the older people were, in 93% of the drawings, depicted alone, could also be indicative of the stereotype of older adults as lonely and having a reduced social network. Though not prevalent and not statistically significant, several titles mentioned loneliness or difficulties; one drawing depicted an old man visiting a loved one's grave.

Clothing, Hairstyles and Accessories

Out of all the older women with full bodies drawn, only 9% wore trousers, the rest being depicted as wearing skirts and tops (72%), and, in a few cases, dresses (19%). The women in the drawings wore 'sensible' shoes, such as nondescript flat shoes (49%), boots (12%) or trainers (5%). Only 9% of women wore high heels. For several drawings of the older women, the feet were not drawn, or were simple stick figures, which did not feature shoes.

Two predominant images of women emerge from the drawings. One is that of the traditional old woman, wearing a headscarf (12%), dressed simply, with a skirt and blouse, reminiscent of an older woman living in the countryside. This type of drawing did not feature other accessories, such as jewellery or hair adornments. Another predominant image is that of the well-groomed, slightly more stylish older woman, who wears necklaces and earrings, hair accessories such as bows, flowers, head bands or hats (15% of drawings had at least one of these features). This representation of an old woman is more likely to have her hair up in a bun (12%) or to have long hair (22%).

However, 52% of all the older women drawn had short or medium hair, which can be interpreted as indicative of an age-specific gender stereotype, reflecting the widespread belief that, as women get older, their hair should get shorter. Men were most often depicted as having short hair; only 13% of the older men had balding or receding hairlines. Facial hair, a stereotypical indicator of masculinity, was also frequently present in the case of men, 21% having a beard and 23% a moustache.

We computed a new variable that measured the total number of accessories/characteristics that each drawing contained. This variable consisted of all the accessories and items each drawn person was given, be they glasses, walking sticks, clothing items, jewellery, hats and headscarves, body piercings, shoes. Overall the drawings of older women had slightly more accessories and details (M=3, SD=2) than those of men (M=2.67, SD=2.07), but the difference did not prove to be statistically significant. Falchikov (1990) argued that a limited and frequently repeated number of characteristics depicted could suggest some degree of stereotyping.

POSITIVE STEREOTYPES ABOUT OLD AGE

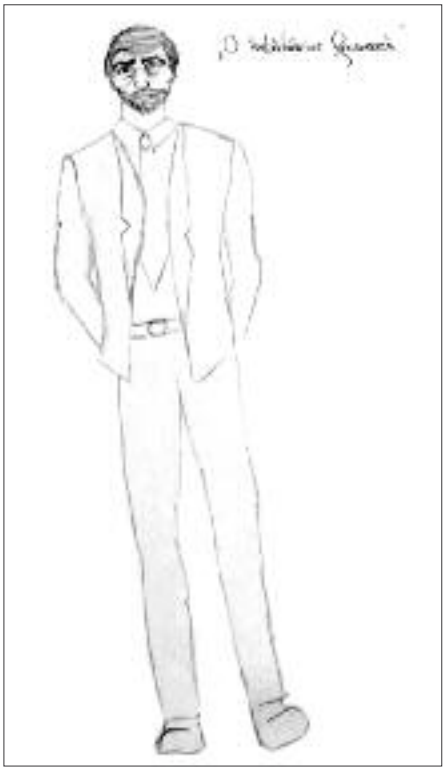


Figure 4. Visual representations of old age: Successful ageing

Positive representations of old age emerged from the drawings. Old age was pictured through positive stereotypes like kindness and being nurturing, and through elements of successful ageing. Still, some gender differences arise. Only women were represented through the idea of kindness and being nurturing, as they were pictured buying, possessing, or offering food (8%). In this case, the old age stereotype is coupled with the gender stereotype. The gender role is also visible when looking at the tendency to assign a grandparent role to the drawn person: 23 of the titles mentioned grandmothers and only 6 of them mentioned grandfathers.

In the case of successful ageing the gender differences were not significant. 21% of the titles were coded through the successful ageing theme (20% men, 17% women). Titles that were coded as suggestive of successful ageing expressed the idea that *age is just a number* and *it's possible to age nicely* (Figure 4). Although we have coded these titles as indicative of the successful ageing theme, most of them did not explicitly mention the social, health or labour dimensions. Still, the drawings that depicted the idea of travelling, being good-looking, along with smiles and optimism portray successful ageing.

DISCUSSION

In the current research, we used students' drawings to assess their implicit attitudes towards older people. Starting from Levy and Banaji's (2002) distinction between explicit and implicit ageism, we argue that drawing tools could be seen as alternative techniques to access subtle attitudinal cues, besides the Implicit Association Tests (IAT) that have been largely used to study implicit attitudes. In the following, we will summarise the main findings and relate them to other studies on ageing stereotypes using drawings. We relate particularly with the study of Barrett and Cantwell (2007), the only one we know in which participants were adults (students), as in our sample. Similarly to our study, Barrett and Cantwell (2007) explicitly claimed to research implicit attitudes, though the term "implicit ageism" was not used as such.

First, we found that students drew both old men and old women to relatively the same extent, contrary to other studies (e.g. Falchikov, 1990; Lichtenstein et al., 2005) that show that when researching implicit attitudes adults are more inclined to draw men and show more negative attitudes compared to the explicit measurements of ageing stereotypes. We also saw that students show a preference to draw a person from their own gender group. This is an interesting finding that has not being revealed by other similar studies, probably due to the fact that most of the studies using drawings were conducted on children. In the current study we found evidence for a projection mechanism: adult people tend to draw older people from their own gender group, probably as a projective self. This will probably create a more positive implicit and explicit attitude towards ageing and could be an explanation of the ambivalent ageing stereotype.

Second, similarly to Barrett and Cantwell (2007), and also to studies conducted on children, we found that old women were depicted in more positive terms compared to old men. They were often presented in a grandmother role, as friendly, serving food and showing positive emotions. Also titles associated with the drawings of older women included diminutives, and this did not happen in sketches of old men. We can interpret diminutives as a sign of a positive attitude but also as a way of infantilizing old people. As Levy and Banaji (2002) underlined, one way to fight implicit ageism is to control the infantilizing language when addressing older people. Also, similarly to other studies that have researched age stereotype, we found evidence for including physical degradation in the sketches: both in the titles and in the visual representations of older people. In other studies (e.g. Falchikov, 1990; Lichtenstein et al., 2005) difficulty to walk or baldness were signs of physical degradation, especially in drawings that included old men. We found the same, that such physical trace of old age and frailty were more present in the pictures in which old men were depicted. One possible explanation is that general implicit attitudes are far more negative in the case of older men, than for older women, as studies presented in the current paper underlined. Another explanation could be the fact that students used their own grandmothers as anchors, in sketches representing older women. Some explicitly said this in the titles: "my grandmother", but the frequency to which students have used their grandparents as anchors for their drawings remains unknown and it is one limitation of the current study. The next step in this research project will combine drawing tools with interview techniques and open discussions over the drawings, in an attempt to reveal how students' visual representations of older people change as a result of their anchors (for example, drawing an old person

in general or starting from someone real – an older adult with a significant role in their lives). In fact, there is evidence that when subjects are asked to evaluate specific older people, their explicit attitudes become more positive than when people are asked to evaluate old people in general. Our research proved that this might be the case also when people's implicit attitudes are investigated. These aspects will be considered in the next stage of the current research, in which the quantitative-qualitative mix will be replaced with semi-structured interviews, leading to less flexible coding.

Third, we found evidence for the successful age rhetoric in the students' sketches. The idea of ageing well and being responsible for your own process of ageing is dominant in Western countries, pervasive in the EU rhetoric (see Rozanova, 2010; Duduciuc, 2016) and seems to influence students' choices in drawing older adults. If indeed some of the students use projective mechanisms when drawing the sketches, the successful ageing cues could be part of an internalised successful ageing discourse: students would like to be successful older adults showing little signs of physical degradation, fashionable clothing and fit bodies. Such clues are found in the sketches presenting positive views on older age. Again, interviewing students about the meaning of their drawings could shed light over the way projective mechanisms have interfered in their choices.

Finally, we can ask ourselves whether drawing tools are valid ways to access implicit ageism. There is no doubt that drawing has a not that limited level of control of Implicit Association Tests (IAT) – in which people are not aware of their reactions to presented stimuli and have no ability to control them. Still, when drawing, we do not access the same level of control as when we formulate answers in self-reported surveys. We are less aware of subtle cues which transcend our intention to present ourselves in a positive way to others and to inhibit reactions that might be disliked by the society. Therefore when using drawing techniques we access an intermediate level of control by which we can provide evidence of people's implicit-explicit attitudes. To prove such a statement one should compare the results of different techniques (IAT, survey measures, drawings) using similar samples and the same target group and reveal the differences. This is what we intend in our further work on visual ageism (a term coined by Loos and Ivan in 2018).

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS

LOREDANA IVAN – is an associate professor at the College of Communication and Public Relations (SNSPA). Since 2013 she is associate researcher at the Interdisciplinary Internet Institute (IN3), Open University of Catalonia, Barcelona, Spain. She is part of the research programme Mobile Technologies and (G)local Challenges(Mobtech) lead by Manuel Castells and Mireia Fernández-Ardèvol. She is part of the ACT international network – Ageing Communication Technology. From 2014, Loredana Ivan is MC from Romania to EU European Cooperation in Science and Technology, COST ACTION IS 1402 Ageism – a multi-national, interdisciplinary perspective. She has coordinated the project "AGE-TECH. The Relation Between Technology and Age: Understanding Computer Anxiety for Older Adults" – funded by the Romanian Executive Agency for Higher Education, Research, Development, and Innovation Funding. Loredana Ivan was a Marie Curie fellow (2003-2004) at the University of Groningen, Interuniversity Center for Methodology (ICS).

IOANA SCHIAU – is an assistant professor at the College of Communication and Public Relations (SNSPA) and holds a PhD in communication science. She has been part of several research projects, including "AGE-TECH. The Relation Between Technology and Age: Understanding Computer Anxiety for Older Adults" – A Young Research Team project funded by the Romanian Executive Agency for Higher Education, Research, Development, and Innovation Funding. She is part of the ACT international network – Ageing Communication Technology. Her research interests revolve around the area of ageing and include studies on the use of humour by older adults, use of digital technologies by older audiences and visual representations of older adults.

CORINA BUZOIANU – is an associate professor at the College of Communication and Public Relations (SNSPA) and has a PhD in the epistemology of image and postdoctoral studies in qualitative research in communication. Her research focus includes image studies and social representations, identity-alterity relationship, crisis communication and qualitative research in communication. Since 2012, Corina Daba-Buzoianu is a member in the Identity and Image Lab. She is currently involved in several international research projects and in a national research project on ageing and technology (AGE-TECH. The Relation Between Technology and Age). Since 2013, Corina Daba-Buzoianu is involved in organizing the Qualitative Research in Communication international conference.

SLOVENSKÝ NÁRODOPIS SLOVAK ETHNOLOGY
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ARTICLES

CHOOSING THE RIGHT AGE GROUP?: INTERSECTIONAL ANALYSIS OF DEMAND FOR PAID DOMESTIC WORKERS IN SLOVAKIA

ZUZANA SEKERÁKOVÁ BÚRIKOVÁ

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Mgr. Zuzana Sekeráková Búriková, Ph.D., Fakulty of Social Studies, Masaryk University, Joštova 10, 602 00 Brno, Czech Republic, e-mail: burikova@fss.muni.cz

Drawing upon interviews with paid carers and their employers undertaken in Bratislava and Banská Bystrica between the years 2013 – 2015, this article focuses on employment of paid domestic workers (nannies, babysitters, and cleaners) in Slovakia. This research focuses on the situation, which is globally unusual: unlike in Slovakia, where paid domestic workers are local women, paid domestic work is generally undertaken mostly by migrant women or women coded as ethnically other. In general, employment of paid domestic work operates on the base of ethnic hierarchies: women belonging to particular ethnic groups are seen as more or less suitable domestic workers. Analysing demand for nannies, babysitters and cleaners in Slovakia, this article argues that employers of local paid domestic workers do not use ethnicity but age as connoting particular qualities considered as necessary for undertaking paid care or housework. In particular, specific age groups are seen as more or less suitable for doing particular types of paid domestic work (e.g. cleaning, daily care for an infant, babysitting). After describing in detail how employers categorise paid domestic workers according to their age, I will reveal that in decisions of who to employ the age does not operate as an isolated individual category. Rather, it operates in intersection with other categories such as gender and can be understood only when we adopt an intersectional perspective.

Key words: Intersectionality, age, gender, paid domestic work, nannies

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RESEARCH PERSPECTIVE AND RESEARCH METHODS

Ageism is broadly defined as prejudice, stereotyping and unfair treatment of people because of their age (e. g. Butler, 1969; Nelson, 2002). Ageism is similar to racism or

sexism in describing stereotyping or discrimination of people based on their (ascribed) belonging to various social groups or categories (Nelson, 2005). However, existing research usually treats discrimination based on age and discrimination based on gender as distinct and unrelated social phenomena (Harnois, 2015). Indeed, Clary Krekula argues that "[w]ithin the gender theoretical sphere, older women have tended to be left out, and age and ageing are seldom addressed" (Krekula, 2007: 155) and while social gerontologists have frequently studied older women, "social gerontology lacks a widespread connection to theoretical advances from gender research [...]" (Krekula, 2007: 156). Indeed, Krekula describes relations between feminist sociologists and research on ageing as "'diners at separate tables', exchanging glances but without bringing together their conceptual resources" (Krekula, 2007: 156). Instead, Krekula and other researchers (e. g. Harnois, 2015; Taefi, 2009) suggest an intersectional perspective recognising that neither women nor elderly are a homogenous group. Indeed, intersectional approaches do not presuppose an undifferentiated human subject (Anthias, 2012). Rather, they propose that experiences and identities of individuals result from a range of different positions they have in a society and these positions cannot be studied as distinct and unrelated:

> "Broadly speaking, an intersectional approach emphasises the importance of attending to the multiple social structures and processes that intertwine to produce specific social positions and identities. From this perspective, we need to simultaneously attend to processes of ethnicity, gender, class and so on[1] in order to grasp the complexities of the social world and the multifaceted nature of social identities and advantage/disadvantage. (...) In this way classes are always gendered and racialized and gender is always classed and racialized and so on, thereby dispelling the idea of homogeneous and essential social categories" (Anthias, 2012: 106).

Intersectionality has been variously theorised (e. g. Anthias, Yuval Davis, 1992; Collins, 1993; Crenshaw, 1994). This article is inspired by processual intersectional approaches understanding gender and age as intertwining and mutually constructed systems which are done in social interactions rather than existing as distinct and separable qualities of an individual (Anthias, 2012; Lykke, 2012; Krekula, 2007). In particular, within this perspective intersectionality is not simply a matter of adding different grounds of inequality or discrimination together. Rather, it tries to dissolve the boundaries between different social categories:

> "women do not share experiences that are independent of positions like ethnicity, class, age and sexuality. We do not 'do gender' as an isolated process, it has been claimed: when we are 'doing gender' we simultaneously 'do' ethnicity, class, age, sexuality, ability, etc." (Krekula, 2007: 157).

Adopting an intersectional perspective, this article analyses demand for paid domestic workers (i.e. nannies, babysitters and cleaners) in Slovakia. Domestic work is heavily

1 From the perspective of my study it is important that Anthias (2012) in the next part of the text recognises also the importance of age and stage in the life cycle in (re)production of either cultural phenomena or social hierarchies and inequalities.

gendered, being both undertaken by women and seen as constituting femininity (Lutz, 2011; West, Zimmerman, 1987). Drawing upon interviews with both paid domestic workers and their employers I will demonstrate how employers of paid domestic workers use age and stages in life-cycles of women as connoting particular qualities considered as necessary for undertaking paid childcare or housework. Apparently, paid domestic workers are chosen on the base of their age and gender. After describing in detail how employers categorise paid domestic workers, I will reveal that in deciding whom to employ the age does not operate as an isolated individual category. Rather, age and gender intertwine, and demand for paid domestic workers can be understood only when we adopt an intersectional perspective.

This study uses qualitative research methods[2] allowing for deeper insight into the practices and interpretations of research participants. Research methods include ethnographic interviews and participant observation. During the years 2013 – 2015 I interviewed 25 employers (23 females and 2 males) and 11 providers of paid domestic work (full- or part-time nannies, babysitters, and cleaners). Twenty-nine interviews took place in Bratislava, and seven in Banská Bystrica. All interviews, but two, were recorded and transcribed. Empirical material and interview quotes presented in this article are representative examples of the data, illustrating the theoretical discussion well. All names of research participants appearing in this text are pseudonyms.

CONTEXT: PAID DOMESTIC WORK AND HOME-BASED CHILDCARE IN SLOVAKIA

There is growing evidence of increasing demand for paid domestic workers in former socialist countries of Central and Eastern Europe (e. g. Ezzeddine et al., 2014; Kordasiewicz, 2012; Souralová, 2015; Souralová, 2017; Tkach, Hrženjak, 2016) including Slovakia (Sekeráková Búriková, 2016; Sekeráková Búriková, 2017).

I have argued elsewhere that reasons to employ paid domestic workers in Slovakia are related to gaps in the welfare regime, ideology of childcare, local models of parenting and grandparenting, as well as life styles of middle and upper classes (Sekeráková Búriková, 2016; Sekeráková Búriková, 2017). In particular, the state does not provide childcare facilities for children younger than three years (and in some cases even for pre-school children). Parents prefer home-based care (mostly provided by mothers) for children younger than three years and kindergartens for pre-school children older than three years. Full-time nannies are employed when mothers[3] do not provide care for children younger than three years, usually because returning to their workplace before their child turns three. Part-time nannies are employed when mother wants to participate in some part-time work during maternity or parental leave, has twins, or children with different developmental needs. Cleaners are hired when middle and upper classes, who often work long hours, prefer not to spend their

2 For more details on research methods and analysis look at Sekeráková Búriková (2017).

3 Fathers only rarely take maternity or parental leave in Slovakia. While the of women on parental leave oscillated around 69 thousand between 2004 and 2013, the number of men was during same time 480 (Hanzelová, Kešelová, 2014). Among employers analysed within this research no man took maternity or parental leave, and interviewees did not mention fathers as possible substitutes for mothers (For details see Sekeráková Búriková, 2017).

free time doing housework. Babysitters and sometimes part-time nannies are hired from similar reasons, since they enable parents to spend free time without children. Part-time nannies also accompany children to and from school, or to and from various free time activities (Sekeráková Búriková, 2016; Sekeráková Búriková, 2017).

Employers of paid domestic workers belong to middle and upper classes in the widest sense of the word. Previous research demonstrates that paid domestic work is usually undertaken by migrant women (Anderson, 2000; Henshall Momsen, 1999; Lutz, 2008). Because of the restrictive migration policy in Slovakia, combined with the relatively low economic attractiveness of the country (Divinský, 2007; Divinský, 2009; Filadelfiová et al., 2011; Hlinčíková et al., 2014), the demand for paid care is supplied not by migrants but rather by local women. The employment of paid domestic workers in Slovakia is not situated within either global or regional care chains (Hochschild, 2000; Hochschild 2003; Parreñas, 2000; Parreñas, 2001; Williams, 2012; Yeates, 2012): neither paid domestic workers nor their employers are migrants; paid domestic workers are local women who neither live in the households of their employers nor do they have young children (Sekeráková Búriková, 2017: 24–29).

Paid domestic work in Slovakia is characteristic by high informality. Paid domestic workers work mostly informally and employers also prefer informal ways of recruiting them. My informants found their nannies, babysitters, or cleaners either through their informal social networks or used the specialized online portal Domelia (2017). Specialized agencies are used less frequently and my informants described them as either too expensive or not professional enough (meaning offering mostly students working part-time). Agencies mediate contractual work; other domestic workers work mostly informally. Furthermore, both paid domestic workers and their employers explicitly distinguish paid domestic work from other paid occupations, describing it as *help*, specific *relationship* or not *an ordinary job*.

As elsewhere (Anderson, 2000; Lutz, 2008; Lutz 2011) paid domestic workers in Slovakia earn low wages. In particular, paid child-carers (i.e. full-time or part-time nannies and babysitters) earned 2 – 6 euro per hour, cleaners 3 – 8 euro per hour. While this is slightly above minimum hourly gross income[4], it is still less than the average hourly wage[5]. Working informally or as self-employed persons, domestic workers are responsible for their health or social insurance. Both low wages and the need to pay for social and health insurance make employment in paid domestic work precarious and attractive to women, who either have some other source of income or at least have their social and health insurance paid by the state. For this reason students, retired women and women registered as unemployed prevail among paid domestic workers. Only a few full-time nannies work as self-employed persons. Since full-time nannies are usually needed during usual working hours, they cannot hold other full-time jobs. Compared to childcare, cleaning is more flexible regarding time, and unlike nannies cleaners often have other jobs and cleaning provides them only with supplementary income (I have repeatedly come across nurses working in hospitals complementing their income cleaning and ironing for other families). However, students and either retired or unemployed older women also prevail (Sekeráková Búriková, 2016).

4 Minimal net wage was in Slovakia 2.023 euro per hour in 2014 (Minimálna mzda, 2015).

5 The average hourly wage was in Slovakia 7.1 euro in 2014 (Finančné centrum o peniazoch, 2015).

UNFOLDING DEMAND: WHO IS SEEN AS SUITABLE FOR DOING PARTICULAR TYPE OF PAID DOMESTIC WORK

Comparing paid domestic workers within my research (i.e. either paid domestic workers I interviewed or paid domestic workers employed by my interviewees) I recognise the following categories of paid domestic workers employed in present Slovakia[6]: firstly, there is a full-time nanny, who looks after a child or children younger than three years[7] from Monday to Friday or daily eight – nine hours. The mother is absent (at work) during this time. Secondly, there is a part-time nanny, who works either daily (but less than eight hours), or for several (but not all) days a week. During this time mother works part-time, undertakes some short-term project alongside maternity leave, does some free time activities or errands, takes a rest, or provides care for her other child or children (usually in case of twins or children with different developmental needs). For example, the mother provides care for a baby while the nanny takes her preschool child to the playground. A part-time nanny is sometimes employed when parents cannot afford a full-time nanny. Thirdly, there are part-time nannies accompanying children to and from school, or to and from various extra-curricular activities. Fourthly, there are babysitters putting children to bed or looking after sleeping children while the parents are out. Babysitters sometimes walk outside with babies sleeping in prams or pushchairs. Fifthly, cleaners, who do a weekly or biweekly cleaning. Sixthly, cleaners, who do occasional cleaning (e.g. wash windows before Christmas, clean the house after renovation).

When I asked my interviewees about their preferences regarding paid domestic workers, I got typified responses. The employers were looking for an *older lady/woman (staršia pani/žena)* or *a pensioner (dôchodkyňa)* on the one hand, and *a student (študentka)*, *young woman (dievča)* or *a young lady (slečna)* on the other hand, or they looked for *a professional (profesionálka)* or *someone qualified (niekto kvalifikovaný)*. While the first two categories are broadly defined by an age and stage in a life cycle, the third one is defined by qualification gained by either institutional education (i.e. students or graduates of specific disciplines such as pedagogy, psychology, or medicine) or specialized courses organised by agencies providing nannies (e. g. first aid certificate, course on childrearing, etc.) and cleaners (e. g. courses on cleaning and cleaning utensils, briefings on attitude towards employers).

I argue that in order to understand employers' ideas about who is suitable to undertake a particular type of paid domestic work we have to take into account a local division of reproductive labour within both nuclear and extended families. The way how reproductive labour is divided and shared is related to particular ways of doing gender (Lutz, 2011; West, Zimmerman, 1987). Since gendered division of labour is different in delegating childcare and in delegating housework, I will start analysing demand for childcare and then continue with housework.

I have argued elsewhere (Sekeráková Búriková, 2016, 2017) that the employment of both full-time and part-time nannies, and babysitters is related to the local culture

6 I based this categorisation on the analysis of practices. Particular categories do not necessarily overlap with labels my informants used for paid domestic workers. I have argued elsewhere that there is not a shared explicit categorisation of paid domestic workers in Slovakia (Sekeráková Búriková, 2017).

7 The full-time nannies look after a child older than three years only if the child has not got a placement in a state kindergarten, or is ill too often to attend a kindergarten.

of childrearing involving help of an extended family (Botíková, Švecová, Jakubíková, 1997; Feglová, 2002; Ratica, 1990; Salner, 1983; Švecová, 1986, 1989). In general, mothers are considered to be the best persons to provide care for young children and grandmothers are seen as the best persons to *help them* with childcare (Marošiová, Šumšalová, 2006). *Help* to children is a common way of spending one's retirement: Retired women expect and are expected to spend at least some of their time looking after their grandchildren (Bútorová, Filadelfiová, 2008). Crucially, my interviewees commented that they decided to hire paid child-carers when grandmothers could not or would not provide them with such a *help*[8].

Not only paid carers substitute for unavailable grandmothers, their employment reflects this model of childrearing in the following ways:

(1) The employers apply a model which is analogous to the model involving help of grandmothers. Hence they want someone who will be *like a grandmother for their child*, meaning the hired person will provide the care mothers associate with an ideal type of grandparenting and/or has similar demographic characteristics such as the age and stage in the life-cycle. Thus they do not expect that nanny will have special courses and qualifications and will teach the child specific skills, but expect that nanny will provide their child with a "natural family environment", will "bake cakes together" with the child, will know "how to dress children when it is cold" or "how to feed them properly". These employers often prefer nannies that are older than themselves – actually, the nannies they employ are often in their mother's age. For example, when Mariana, currently on maternal leave, got an offer to teach a course at the faculty of arts, she decided to hire a part-time nanny to provide care for her six month old son during the time she was teaching and preparing her lessons. She explicitly looked for the nanny who would substitute for absent grandmothers and explicitly looked for the person with experience with grandmothering:

> **Interviewer:** What were your expectations? Whom did you want? What kind of person?
> **Mariana: The only thing I really wanted was an older lady. The thing was that one grandmother was in Brussels and I am not from Bratislava, so my mother was not around either. So I said to myself, God, please let it be an elderly, mature woman, that would be fantastic!**[emphasis by the author] I was not against hiring a student either, but I know they have other demands on their time, they are not flexible. And their sense of responsibility... If it rains, they do not come, that kind of thing. I was afraid of this. **And I needed someone responsible, someone stable, fixed. So I decided – an older woman. And my desire was to have someone, who would be like a grandmother. That would be perfect** [emphasis by the author].
> (...)
> **Interviewer:** And how did you find that lady?
> **Mariana:** Via family. A colleague of a relative of mine hired her as a housekeeper. She was doing cleaning, shopping, etcetera, for their family. This lady had not been

8 I. e. grandmothers either did not live in the same place, they were too ill (or already passed away), or still worked full-time. Other reasons regarded relationship between mother and grandmother (i.e. the relationship between mother and grandmother was strained, mother and grandmother had conflicting ideas about childcare and mother preferred to have more control over childcare, or parents needed more help than grandmother would provide).

a nanny before, she had not cared for children, but we tried it. She was 56 years old, Hugo was six months old at that time. She has finished a high school education, an economic academy, she was working in human resources all her life, she was even a boss of her department. At the time we met she was working in a pawnshop. Housekeeping was only her side job. However, the main thing was that she was a mother of two and grandmother of five. That was the main qualification for me, the main reference was her experience with children. (...) **When I was looking for a nanny, the fact that she was a grandmother and mother was sufficient for me** [emphasis by the author].

(2) Looking for someone who would complement but not substitute the help of grandmothers the employers hire someone who has different demographic characteristics and provides care conceptualized differently from the care provided by grandmothers. For example, Vierka's mother comes once a week to help Vierka with house-chores and children. Usually, while her mother cleans and cooks, Vierka spends time with children outside. Vierka's husband travels a lot for his work, so when Simona – a university student and Vierka's former pupil – offered Vierka *help* with her three children, Vierka agreed and hired her for one – two afternoons a week as a part-time nanny. Simona's work is complementary to *the help* of the grandmother. While the grandmother *helps* Vierka to spend time with the children, Simona allows her to spend time without them: on afternoons when Simona plays with the children Vierka does her errands or meets her husband for a coffee somewhere out. Also Simona's activities with the children are conceptualized as different from activities they do with grandparents: unlike their grandmother, who prefers indoor activities, Simona takes the children outside, where they cycle or spend time at the playground. Vierka is happy that Simona is willing to do things "grandmothers are afraid to do". Vierka's age, experience and care she provides are constructed as different from these provided by grandmother. As such, Simona does not compete with grandmother and does not threaten her unique position in the lives of children.

Employers hiring carers as complementary to grandmothers sometimes delegated tasks to paid carers that they considered tedious and possibly threatening to a good relationship between either children or mother with grandmother:

Katarína:I knew I needed help with transport. I have a highly demanding job and my sons have many [extra-curricular] activities. (...) **I really wished my mother would have my children only when she wanted to. I wanted them to have fun together. I did not want to force her** [emphasis by the author]. I wanted someone alongside my mother. My mother is active, she is still at work, she has not retired yet. My mother has her own life and activities and I want neither to exploit her nor to bother her always, when I need someone. I want to have this freedom. For example, I want to go to movies and hire someone during that time.
Interviewer: What were you looking for? What were your expectations?
Katarína: I needed someone who would accompany them to their extra-curricular activities. That's a passive time [emphasis by the author]. Once I tried it myself [to accompany her sons to training]. (...) **It was completely unproductively spent time** [emphasis by the author]. They were looking forward to training and I was sitting for couple of hours at the bench in front of the gym. I think that time could be spent differently. I prefer waiting for them at home and cooking dinner.

(3) Other employers make an analogous model also originating in an extended family hiring someone, who would be *a friend (kamarátka)* or *like a sister (ako sestra)* to children. Doing so, they look for the person who has appropriate demographic characteristics (i.e. is young and ideally is an older sibling from a family with numerous children). Usually, the person employed is a high school or university student. Some employers insisted that the person they hired was qualified as a carer because she used to care for her many siblings at home. This model is common especially among Christian (both Roman Catholic and protestant) employers, who often successfully recruit their nannies and babysitters through their church networks.

(4) The last type of employers explicitly avoid the analogy of carer with grandmothering or grandmothers reversing the model and looking for carers with different characteristics than grandmothers. Such employers usually avoid older carers as a whole:

> **Henrieta: I just did not want one more granny, who would tell me what to do with the children**[emphasis by the author]. I had enough of that with my mother and mother-in-law. **I wanted a young girl** [emphasis by the author], whom I did not have to legitimize why I wanted her to do or not to do something with my kid.

While employers like Henrieta reverse the familial model (i.e. make a different choice in an explicit relation to the model), there are employers, whose decisions do not reflect the local model of childrearing at all. These employers either (5) delegate tasks they label as menial, boring and unimportant for the child's development to a sufficiently inexpensive and reliable worker[9], or (6) being concerned about class reproduction they decide to employ *a qualified professional carer.* This is not an exhaustive list and there also exist variations and combinations of the listed alternatives: an employer might want a *qualified carer* because she does not want the care resembling care of grandmothers, or someone who wants a carer complementary to a grandmother decides to hire a *professional* or someone who will be like an *older sibling* etc.

Individual choices of child carers are a result of a particular employer's attitude towards the local model of childrearing, developmental stage of the child, and the type of paid domestic worker they are hiring. So when choosing a full-time or part-time nanny who is supposed to look after a baby or toddler, the employers prefer someone *who would be like a grandmother for their child* and chose an older women or they opt for *a professional carer.* Older the child, the frequency of the preference for having someone who would be *like a friend* or *older sibling* increases and having someone *like a grandmother* decreases.

When employers look for someone who would do tasks they consider menial, tedious or unimportant for the child's development or their mutual relationship with the child, they do not look for someone who would be *like a grandmother, older sibling* or *a friend* to their child. They basically want someone who is both reliable and affordable enough to do the task. Given this, they do not necessarily look for the

9 These tasks are accompanying children on their way to and from school or extra-curricular activities placed in various parts of the town; walk in the park with babies or toddlers sleeping in a pram or pushchair; babysitting sleeping children when parents are out.

person, who has certain caring attributes seen as related to the life stage. Often, they look for people who, in their understanding, might welcome a side job (*brigáda*), are not expensive to hire, and are reliable and respectable enough to be in charge of children. Consequently, they look either for *pensioners* living in their neighbourhood or for *students*. Both pensioners living in middle and upper class neighbourhoods and students of universities are considered reliable and respectable enough to do the job. Furthermore, both students and pensioners are situated at the fringes of the labour market and employers agree they do not have to be paid much. Unlike employers of full-time and part-time nannies, employers looking for nannies who would accompany children to and from school and to and from the child's extracurricular activities, or babysitters looking after sleeping children, do not look for a person having specific caring qualities because the person is situated in a specific stage of life cycle. They look for an inexpensive and reliable person and think that the person in a specific stage of their life cycle or, more precisely, the person in a specific work related life cycle (i.e. student or pensioner) will be both reliable and inexpensive. Interviewees often mentioned, that "even a student can do this" (Ivica employing students to walk in the park pushing the pram with her sleeping baby-twins), or, "that's easy work suitable for students" (Eva, explaining, why she is paying their part-time nannies only three euro per hour). Only few employers use agencies providing *professional carers* for this type of work. If they do, they usually want drivers, or do not know other means of how to recruit a domestic worker.

Employers hiring full-time and part-time nannies and babysitters often want a *professional* or *qualified carer*. These carers are supposed to have qualification (gained through institutional or informal education) ensuring proper physical, emotional and intellectual development of the child and his or her security, and be able to encourage the child in developing his or her talents and interests. Hence, these carers are supposed to know foreign languages, play a musical instrument, or be able to draw with a child. However, though parents look for *a professional*, in the end they also find *a student*, because the agencies providing nannies and babysitters offer mostly students doing paid childcare as their side jobs. The agencies do not provide older women, because students have specific taxation and are consequently cheaper to employ, and the owners of agencies associate the idea of professional care related to education with students, who are in a life stage dedicated to education. Some owners of the agencies also explicitly relate age with ability to provide care to young children. For example, the owner of the agency in the interview for the Slovak radio[10] said:

> **Journalist:**Is the age important in choosing the right nanny?
> **Agency representative:** Personally, I think it is very important that the person is energetic. It might sound funny, but in order to provide an adequate care to children and keep up with them, the person providing care has to be close to children in age. To keep up with their needs, because children are very active. Thus I prefer girls under thirty. And the minimal age is twenty.

In contrast to paid child carers, employment of cleaners and housekeepers is not directly related to the presence or absence of grandmothers. Rather, it relates to the

10 The interview was broadcasted on February 2nd 2013 in the programme *Dobrý večer, Slovensko*. It is available at the webpage of the agency (Baby Nanny, 2016) in the first record from 1,57'to 2,19'.

division of labour within a nuclear family. When asked about the situation leading to the employment of paid domestic workers my interviewees rather referred to their husbands, who were working too long hours or were too exhausted by their workload to undertake a more equal share of housework. While employment of cleaners and housekeepers does not reflect the local model of childrearing, it reflects gendered division of labour within the nuclear family and gendered character of reproductive work: all domestic workers I came across were female.

The employers' categorization of cleaners and housekeepers is slightly different than categorisation of paid child carers. I have not encountered a shared stereotype connecting a particular age group or specific phase of life cycle with the ability to perform housework or particular type of housework (for example ironing or general cleaning). However, this does not mean that employers do not have strong opinions about the suitability of particular age groups or women with specific life course experience for undertaking (a particular kind of) housework. Indeed, the opinions of individual employers were similar to these demonstrated in the previous part. The difference is that unlike preferences of employers of child carers the preferences of employers of cleaners do not form any generally shared pattern. Rather, the mechanism connecting particular types of workers with housework is similar to the logic of hiring au pairs. Considering particular ethnicity as a guarantee of qualities they expect from an au pair, host families commonly hire a string of au pairs coming from the same country. While one British family decides to employ French au pairs expecting them to be sophisticated governesses able to teach their children French, another family prefers Slovak au pairs seeing them as hardworking and warm. Just as another family can think of Slovak au pairs as not dedicated enough and doing too many side-jobs and as such, cross them out from the list of suitable au pairs. Often, the opinions on suitable ethnicity of au pairs are based on the experience with the first au pairs of that ethnicity, hence a host family can decide to employ only Czech au pairs, because they had loved the spirit of their first Czech au pair and expect that other Czech au pairs will be similar (Anderson, 2007; Búriková, Miller, 2010). In an analogical way employers of paid domestic workers in Slovakia see women belonging to particular age groups/phases in life-cycle or coming from specific professions as more or less suitable cleaners and housekeepers. In particular, while some employers consider *students (študentky)*, or *young ladies (slečny)* as suitable cleaners, because they are young, strong, docile and *educable* (i.e. they accept the employers' ideas and techniques of cleaning), other employers dismiss them as irresponsible and careless. Similarly, while some employers prefer older domestic workers – *ladies (panie)*, *pensioners (dôchodkyne)*, *older women (staršie ženy)*, *older ladies (staršie dámy)* – describing them as experienced, responsible and having a knack for details, others see them as *too bossy* or physically weak. And as employers of child carers, some employers of cleaners prefer *professionals* and use specialized agencies, or decide to employ nurses who often do ironing or cleaning as a side job alongside their shifts in hospital.

INTERSECTIONALITY REVISITED: A STUDENT OR A PENSIONER?

In the previous part I examined preferences the employers have regarding particular types of paid domestic workers and revealed nuances of their decisions related to women they call *students*, *girls*, *young ladies* on the one hand and *pensioners*, *older*

women or ladies on the other hand. Now I am going to focus on what exactly my interviewees meant by these categories.

All paid domestic workers within my study are females and belong to one of two age groups: They are either older than eighteen and younger than thirty years (e.g. *students*, *girls*, *young ladies*), or older than fifty-five and younger than seventy years (e. g. *older women*, *pensioners*, *ladies*). The women belonging to the first group are younger, those belonging to the second group older than their employers. However, it would be simplifying at best to see the gender and age of paid domestic workers as two distinct hierarchies or additive principles (Krekula, 2007: 163) the employers use in order to choose a domestic worker and to decide how to pay (or, more frequently, underpay) her. They don't basically look for a woman, who is in her thirties. Actually, in demand for paid domestic work age and gender are mutually constitutive and inseparable principles the employers use in order to position particular female as more or less suitable to do a particular type of domestic work. This intersection of age and gender regards reproduction and the labour market.

When my interviewees looked for a nanny, they were looking for a female in a specific stage of her reproductive life. In particular, they were looking either for a woman who has experience with motherhood and has grown up children, or were looking for a young woman who has not entered the reproductive phase yet and does not have children of her own. The fact that the woman is a successful mother (i.e. has grown up children) is the key qualification for the job. When Mariana in an interview quoted above spoke about her wishes to find an older woman, she mentioned that the main reference for her was the fact that her prospective nanny was mother and grandmother. The experience ascribed to the age in the interview intertwines with gendered identities related to mothering and it is not possible to divide them and see them as separable entities.

Not only demand, also the supply of paid domestic workers is structured in relation to this intersection of age and gender. Neither younger nor older child carers have other caring responsibilities. Younger women working as nannies and babysitters do not have children yet and older women have grown up children and do not have grandchildren yet. My older interviewees claimed they would stop working as nannies once they had grandchildren and indeed, Judita stopped her side job as part-time nanny once her daughter had a child. Women who have young children of their own provide paid childcare only as childminders in their own homes, where they look after children alongside their own child, and do not work as nannies and babysitters in the homes of their employers.

This intersection of age and gender in an employment of paid domestic work has also the dimension related to broader economic structures and labour market. As I have mentioned, women working as paid domestic workers usually rely on the state for having their social and health insurance paid: i.e. they are students, pensioners, (less often) unemployed, or they do paid care and housework as a side job complementing their main income. Adéla Souralová (2014) argues that both young women working as au pairs and elderly women working as nannies for Vietnamese families in the Czech Republic are positioned in a liminal phase in relation to a labour market: the au pairs have not started their full participation in the labour market and nannies have just finished participating in the labour market. Among the unemployed nannies I interviewed were women who had lost their jobs shortly before their retirement age or women who finished their university education but either could

not find the job they wanted (such as Johanka, who finished her studies as a preschool teacher and worked as a nanny while she was looking for a job in a kindergarten) or took "the break" after university and before embarking in a corporate job such as Tereza.

CONCLUSION

In this article I described in detail demand for paid domestic workers in Slovakia. I have demonstrated how employers differentiate among *students/younger women/young ladies* and *pensioners/older women/ladies* working as paid domestic workers, and introduced reasons why they prefer particular groups for particular types of work. I argued that it is neither gender nor age per se that makes these women suitable nannies and babysitters. It is a specific phase in a gendered life cycle that enables younger women to position themselves and be positioned as energetic older siblings and older women as affectionate grandmothers without threatening exclusivity of care either for their own children and grandchildren, or for their charges. I also revealed that when choosing a student or a pensioner, the employers choose a particular type of care they associate with particular group of people. I demonstrated that students and pensioners can connote different types of care regarding the type of work they are employed for. So when employing a full-time nanny looking after a baby, a pensioner is seen as a substitute grandmother and as such is expected to provide the care resembling a family setting. When employing a student for similar care, employers see students as professional carers having skills gained through education. In contrast, when employing the very same students as part-time nannies accompanying children to their free-time activities, they are basically seen as reliable and inexpensive source of labour. In other settings care provided by students can be constructed as similar to the care provided by an energetic older sibling or an older friend. Clearly, while the employers of paid domestic workers in Slovakia use the intersection of age and gender as the point of departure for ascribing qualities necessary for undertaking paid domestic work, this very same intersection connotes different qualities in relation to the type of domestic worker.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

ZUZANA SEKERÁKOVÁ BÚRIKOVÁ – teaches social anthropology at the Department of Sociology, Faculty of Social Sciences, Masaryk University (Brno, Czech Republic). Together with Daniel Miller she published the book *Au pair* (Polity 2010) on the experience of Slovak au pairs and their host families in London. Her second book *Doing Cleaning and Childcare: Paid domestic work in Slovakia* (Panie k deťom a na upratovanie. Podoby platenej práce v domácnosti) was published by Muni Press in September 2017.

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BOOK ESSAY

ALEX ROTAS

GROWING OLD COMPETITIVELY: PHOTOGRAPHS OF MASTERS ATHLETES

Bristol: Alex Rotas Publishing, 2014, 69 p.

If someone told you that they were a sports photographer, wrinkled faces would probably not be the first thing you would imagine. Wrinkled faces will not be what catch your eye when you look at the pictures of athletes over sixty, taken by British photographer Alex Rotas. The first that you would probably notice in her pictures is the huge commitment to their performance and perhaps immense certitude and the related coolness of aged athletes.

Through fascinating pictures of older athletes, Alex Rotas decided to challenge ageism in our society, by which she means "any expectation that I or anyone at a certain age is going to behave any particular way... according to their age. So you can also talk about 'reckless young people', or young people who are always on social media..." (interview)[1]; hence, she does not limit photographing the oldest generation, even though this is her particular focus. What she seeks to capture in her pictures is the fact that "masters athletes don't necessarily look younger than they are. ... What they all look is very alive: empowered, focused, determined and joyful. What I have learned from them is that it is possible to look your age, to look 'old' even, and wonderful." (Rotas, 2014: 8)

In her own words, her own mission is as follows: "Fighting ageism means we need to fight the idea you've got to really be youthful or young. And that it's actually fine to have the wrinkles, to look old, and that you can look wonderful with wrinkles. You can look wonderful whatever your age is if you look full of life. And that's, I think, one of my messages. One of the things I enjoy with photographing these athletes is that they usually have lots of wrinkles. Because they are outside all the time. But they still look wonderful!" (interview)

Alex herself has always been a passionate sportswoman; she still plays tennis and thinks that her time as an athlete may still be to come. Photographing athletes close to or even in their 90s has helped her think this way.

"I think that's the thing I'm enjoying most – feeling, through meeting and photographing all these amazing people, that my life is getting bigger when actually I'm at an age when it could be narrowing down." (interview)

She herself has had multiple new experiences with multiple new beginnings, both in her private and professional life. She took up photography after she retired, as a second-career woman (Feglová, 2004) and, according to her own words, she feels more freedom in this "profession" than in her previous jobs or other activities:

1 This book essay may have a bit of an unconventional format, as in addition to her book we also deal with Alex Rotas as an author on the basis of an interview that we conducted in January 2018.

"My whole life has been very much trying to control life, having plans and goals and maybe reaching some, maybe not. Now I am kind of doing the opposite to what I did in my other lives. Which is I am just letting go, letting things flow. I haven't got any plan at all, I have got no master plan, I have got no goals, I'm just letting this project take me where it will." (interview)

In this part of the interview, Alex Rotas refers to the perception of retirement filled with leisure or pastime without a specific goal, which fully corresponds to the widespread discourse in the countries of the global North about a deserved reward for a well-done job (pensioners being "released" from work), which distinguishes it from the state of unemployment (all unemployed being excluded from work) and loafing. It is therefore not necessary to fill the retirement period with new work or activities which are economically beneficial for society. Spare time dedicated to hobbies or even loafing is becoming something that is justified. British sociologist Andrew Blaikie noted twenty years ago that changes can be observed mainly in the field of leisure activities, travelling and holidays. We can thus observe how "inactivity" is becoming common, adopted and fixed through means of mass suggestion of the public discourse (1999). Special forms of how to spend the time in retirement can develop once the institutional and financial prerequisites are ready and available on one hand, and when a different perception or recognition of the difference between retirement and unemployment, i.e. leisure spent by "doing nothing", can be promoted in society on the other hand.

However, the decision of Alex Rotas made corresponds rather more to the choice of "starting to do something completely new".

"I didn't know anything about photography. I didn't even have a camera. But I like being a beginner, so I just thought it would be fun to learn how to take photographs. I've never been an expert at anything, I keep finding myself down at the bottom of the big learning curve, and I like that. I am on the bottom of the curve and I can see all the stuff I am going to learn, which implies an active future, and I am really excited about that.

I like making mistakes. I love that, now. I grew up in a culture, where I wasn't allowed to make mistakes so it is very liberating for me. My family background is that I had to be an achiever ... making mistake was a big 'no no' in my family. And as I get older and I am finding how freeing it is to let go of this need to achieve... I mean that I am taking up running and I am not good at running at all... and it has been incredibly liberating to find that I can do something that I am actually not good at and enjoy it! I don't run fast and I don't run that far and actually I can still enjoy it. That's so new to me as I approach the age of 70. That's another great thing about getting old." (interview)

The beginning of her photographing was marked by her interest in sports and gender, related to her academic career: There was a huge difference between how the elite male and female tennis players presented themselves on their own websites, she discovered. Later she wanted to observe how the media depicted older athletes. She was surprised to learn that actually the media

didn't depict them at all. There simple were no visual images to be found:

"I started getting interest in looking at images of sportsmen and women, simply out of personal interest as a sporty person myself and someone who loves tennis. If you looked at the websites of female tennis players some ten years ago, you often would be hard pressed to see a tennis racket. They chose images that sexualized and objectified themselves. They often were not wearing tennis clothes; I mean it was incredible... The men on the other hand, presented themselves as subjects rather than objects. They'd show themselves playing tennis, doing their charity work, living out their lives with nonchalance and authority. This was such a contrast to the ways the women had chosen to objectify themselves. And I was completely blown away and I started writing some papers as an academic on that subject. It was a bit dodgy actually because I felt I was kind of criticizing very high profile tennis players.

Anyway, I did a google search one day, just out of interest, thinking I'm going to have a look at the images that are out there of older athletes cause maybe I could turn my attention to this topic now and write a paper on this subject. I was an older competitive tennis player myself so I knew that people went on doing their sports and competing through the older age groups. So I did a search and that was when I was really shocked to find that there were no images, so there was nothing to critique..." (interview)

She decided to fill the gap in 2011 and set out on a journey which led to the publishing of her book *Growing Old Competitively* (2014). Her aim was to show, among other things, that our best years can come at any age; the people she photographs convinced her "to look at the years ahead with enthusiasm and excitement..." (Rotas, 2014: cover). The perspective of Alex Rotas thus fully corresponds to the concept of four ages by Peter Laslett. British social historian Peter Laslett calls his work Fresh Map of Life (1989) or its German version Das dritte Alter (1995) the historical sociology of the old-age. Some parts of his work could rather be called a normative – a kind of a guide on what the third age means and how the author would imagine its form in the UK. The author sees his work as an opportunity for "proposing and taking measures against the chicane of the birth date lottery" (Laslett, 1995: 45). He clearly attempts to conceptualise high age in a more positive manner. According to Laslett, the life of an individual begins with the age of dependence, socialisation, immaturity and upbringing – the first age. This age is relatively without responsibility and of low authority towards others. It is followed by the age of independence, maturity and responsibility, earning activity and saving. According to Laslett, it cannot be the age of fulfilment, as work and the related status are, in spite of everything, determined by other people, the employer. The second age is the age at which the individual is not the master of his time. Our time belongs to the company from the moment we take up a job (Laslett, 1995: 272). The third age is the period of personal fulfilment, and usually relates to the later life stage after retirement. During the third age, the subjective age is more important than ever before in terms of living. It brings certain timelessness to this phase of life. And finally, the fourth age is characterised by irreversible dependence, weakness and death. The time it comes varies; the third age has no fixed upper limit. There are many activities and interests that we can continue performing, even though the body gradually weakens, even to an advanced extent.

Although Laslett's work was published some time ago, even today it differs to the view of the retirement life period in some European countries (including Slovakia), where sometimes the old age is depicted as the period of decline and loss in all aspects of life. Similar negative ideas are the basis of ageism in European society, against which Alex Rotas decided to fight through the images of aged athletes. The way she has chosen primarily to challenge ageism, "is by providing images that show older people doing things that you might not normally

expect them to do. I am putting images in the public domain as much as I can – images of older people who are physically very active and elite – have elite bodies in their 60s, 70s, 80s and 90s, because my primary aim was to show what the ageing body is capable of and challenge the automatic believes that age means inevitable decline and passivity and so on." (interview)

In her book, she stresses the importance of the body itself in athletic races. Unlike in tennis, which she plays, athletes' performance would not be helped by a high-tech racket with superb strings or indeed high-level racket skills that might obviate the need to run fast. In most cases, athletes have only their bodies to use. They turn up at the starting line, the gun goes, and they're off. They're either fast or they're not. They have only their bodies to rely on: "I love tennis but as a new observer to track and field events, I find this honesty, this nakedness even, both moving and beautiful" (Rotas, 2014: 6).

Body and embodiment[2] as the central theme of pictures goes hand in hand with the interest in old age themes mainly in culture sciences. These themes have been long avoided by researchers in connection with old age in social gerontology (unlike cultural gerontology which dealt with and still deals with this topic; see, for example, Turner, 1991; Shilling, 2012). The probable reasons were fears that the focus on the "deteriorating" body would ultimately turn against the ideas they had preferred. They sought to avoid the reduction of the old age to physiological and medical processes that would suppress the importance of its social and cultural construction (Twigg, Martin, 2015: 3). However, several books published recently explore the comprehensive nature of embodiment in old age (Öberg, 1996; Gilleard, Higgs, 2013; Tulle, 2015).

Some may be surprised by the fact that the times and other results achieved by senior athletes in top-class races differ little from the performance of athletes in younger age categories who are at the centre of attention of the sports audience all over the world. Rotas compares in her book, for example, the times of the runners to the times of the multiple world champion and Olympic winner Usain Bolt. His record in 100m run is 9.58 seconds. The times of the fastest 100m runners in the age category of 70–74 years are around 12.77 seconds, which is less by only 3 seconds.

Alex Rotas notes that it is sometimes difficult for her to guess who competes in which age category. People age at different rates and a group of 55 year olds, even 55-year-old elite athletes, can look very different. On the other hand, the championships have a certain order that makes you feel like you're travelling in time. Masters athletes compete in 5-year age bands, starting from 35–39 years old, then 40–44, 45–49, 50–54 and so on right up to 100+: "The events always start with the oldest age groups and it's fascinating watching the five-year bands flash by, one after the other, in front of your eyes. It's almost as though you're watching a reverse life-cycle (Rotas, 2014: 6).

On the other hand, Alex Rotas is well aware that stressing the activity and achievement of older athletes can "run the risk of presenting an alternative dictate... namely that there is only one way to get old and that's by being physically active. Of course that's absolutely not true. I always welcome the opportunity to use words as well as images, I can talk about the fact that I think there are lots of ways of ageing actively. Some may be physical but others may not; for example you can actively engage your mind thinking about difficult and challenging stuff... this obviously requires activity. Also even emotionally engaging with your friends, with your family... a sort of emotional response is also very active, I mean it's challenging – you know, you are sitting in a chair but you are trying to respond in

2 In ethnology/anthropology, embodiment represents the manner of describing porous, bodily, perceived, revived experience in the social context.

a loving way to your family when you are presented with challenging situations and you have to really examine your own sort of response, and that's not easy. And I think that is also something we should do at every age. For me, this too is a sort of way to describe active aging." (interview)

According to Alex Rotas, sometimes the images need explanations or caveats, especially when they are shown to older people. I would hate them to think: "I should be doing this! And if I am not I am failing at this ageing. My photos just show one way of ageing, not THE way to age." (interview)

The paradigm of active or successful ageing represents a project of the present, based on individualist autonomous personalities able to make choices about themselves, with the possibility of individual control over their own lives, recognising the values of agelessness and avoiding the negative aspects of old age. Successful ageing inspires us and, in its essence, posits the fact that the negative aspects of old age can be shifted to a higher and higher age, until they disappear – all this thanks to a combination of medical interventions and individual efforts. This in fact corresponds to the neoliberal principle of transferring responsibility for one's own life almost exclusively onto the individuals themselves who control their own lives through choices and activities they perform in line with the slogan "Everyone is the architect of his own happiness". Active ageing is usually understood as economically productive ageing (Boudiny, 2013), dedication to a healthy lifestyle and "ageless" appearance (besides medicine, with extensive help of sports, clothing and cosmetic industry), which represent new goals that older people should actively pursue. However, the other nuances of active or successful ageing are not so attractive, though they are harder to recognise: the hyper-positive attitude to ageing is ageist in its essence by suppressing vulnerability, decline and dependence on others which are intrinsically linked to old age and ageing as part of human life. Sara Lamb noted in her book: "What of those of us who don't make it to ninety or one hundred without pain and suffering? If one develops vulnerabilities in later life, does that mean that one has 'failed' at ageing?" (Lamb, 2017: xi)

Thus Alex Rotas is aware too that images of active or successful ageing "erased the social factors behind: The privilege that allows people to go and do yoga, sports and other things, are far from universal. I am very, very aware of my own privileged position. That am a white woman in my, you know, nearly 70, that I belong to a sports club, I have time and facility to eat well and make choices about how I spend my time." (interview)

During her work, Alex Rotas meets different people from different countries and different social backgrounds. Their stories represent a firm part of her book.

"I think this was what surprised me when I started to take these photos. I didn't expect to get a relationship with the people I was photographing, and yet I have. ... It's very life-enhancing for me to have learned the stories that people have. I didn't expect to have the privilege of people sharing as much about their lives as they have done with me or the new friendships I have made." (interview)

In connection with the stories of living human beings, Alex Rotas reflects on the ethical aspects of her work. It is not suitable to share publicly all the information she gets, however, what surprised her were the illness narratives:

"What I found really moving is that they are usually very happy to share details about their illnesses. So a lot of them have had cancers and strokes and they actually want to talk about them and they like the idea that this may encourage other people. It's not like they are breed of super humans, they are absolutely not, they are the same as everybody else, they get the same strokes, they get the same cancers they have the same heart attacks and issues..." (interview)

Talking about illnesses and focusing on sports as a means or aid to cope with the consequences of health problems have been

part of the illness narratives genre since the end of the 1980s. Through personal life stories, seriously ill patients sought to present to doctors or other medical professionals and to the public the impacts of their illness on their work, family life, identity and the perception of themselves. They attempted to describe the way their illness was becoming part of their life, the changing attitude of society towards them, and their status that they acquired as a result of their illness. Arthur Kleinman calls these stories illness stories or illness narratives (Kleinman, 1988).

People usually do not have a precise idea about how many senior athletes do top-class sports. There are actually thousands of them over the different age groups but over time you discover, says Rotas, that it is the same people who meet at the races, creating what comes to feel like a small community. This is especially true in the higher age groups, where actual numbers of competitors declines. Throughout the year many of these athletes will be saving money not for their holidays, but for visiting at least two events – a summer championship and a winter indoor championship and for competing in the sport they love. Hence, a major factor behind their meetings is not only the contest itself, but friendships:

"I've got pictures of people being very active but they have lots of pictures of people who are very joyful and one of the reasons why people carry on doing competitive sport is because of the community. And because of the camaraderie." (interview)

"People die, that's another really sad thing. And I have been thinking about how affected I have been when somebody I have photographed and got to know has died. Sometimes this has been because of sudden illness. Sometimes because of 'old age'" (interview)

The photographer and the athletes she photographs develop a deeper relationship, says Rotas, because sometimes the pictures can feel really intimate. When you are engaged in high-level sport, all your focus is on your body. Athletes of any age are not paying attention to what they do with their face when they compete. And it is those very intimate moments of facial expression that the photographer captures. It is definitely her skill and experience that enables Alex Rotas to photograph people so that they feel satisfied and they like the pictures. "I would never publish a picture that makes them look bad. You know, there are some tricks I'm learning, for example especially with an older body you trying get them as they are in the air when they are running. If you get them when the leg lands on the ground, all the muscles kind of drop, and you want to show their energy, their 'bounce'. Little things like that make a difference." (interview)

In addition to photographing senior athletes, exhibitions and book publishing, Alex Rotas works in a radio, in a sports programme in which she brings up new topics:

"I came on and wanted to talk about gender and they just want to talk about football tactics. And I am talking about gender and stuff like that and representation so you know, I present an alternative voice." (interview)

She is also invited to speak on sports in higher age at motivational lectures held at various places. She has discovered that people want to hear her own story too as well as the stories of the people represented in her book. When she first realised that interviewers were interested in her too, she was initially perplexed.

"I was in my early sixties and I was thinking I am just a middle-aged woman who takes photographs of old people, what's interesting about that? And then I had one of those light-bulb moments and I thought oh my God, no – I am an old person who takes photographs of old people and I am a part of the story..." (interview)

Being a part of the story is a strong momentum that entitles her to speak from the insider's perspective. On the other hand, Alex Rotas enjoys intergenerational communication in her work, as well:

"I need help now in a lot of technical aspects and I also need help with social

media and I mean I'm just trying to make myself use Instagram. So I had to get help from younger people, younger than my children, I mean students who are in their early twenties. And it is fabulous because they're helping me. And I hear about their lives too. This contact has been an unexpected blessing." (interview)

With respect to the many projects to which Alex Rotas dedicates her time, in the future she plans to focus on projects that bring together several generations: "I am increasingly thinking that intergenerational projects are the way to go.

When I first started doing this work I was interested in thinking about different words for different types of older people. I was thinking there should be a word for the younger-old, the older-old and then the old-old, but I've stopped thinking that now. I think we're all in it together and all these potential categories contain and divide people. I just think that any project that is intergenerational is probably the best way forward. I've seen one or two examples of that in sport and it is just very empowering. It somehow feels kind of normal, it's normalizing. Everyone competing is just a person who loves this particular sport. You may need to keep the different age-groups competing together. But they can perhaps compete on the same day, in the same arena, in front of the same crowd. I know it's difficult to stop thinking and assessing whoever you are talking to on the basis of the age. But maybe it's the way we should be going." (interview)

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ĽUBICA VOĽANSKÁ,
Institute of Ethnology of SAS in Bratislava