

# Übersetzung k09e01

00:00:00

Dear students, my name is Stefan Görres, I am a university lecturer at the University of Bremen and head of the Department of Interdisciplinary Research on Ageing and Nursing.

00:00:12

Today we want to deal with an important topic, namely diversity in old age, and also briefly address some theoretical models. I have phrased three learning objectives for this session: You should end up knowing theoretical approaches that explain diversity in old age. You should be aware of the practical significance of diversity in old age and you should be able to assess future challenges.

00:00:45

I prepared a short agenda, six points will accompany my presentation. First, I will talk about a prejudice concerning the topic of age, then I will briefly address demographic change, diversity and ageing will at the core of this talk. Then I will use an example, namely housing, to show the need for action that arises from the diversity of ageing and then discuss future challenges, before drawing a brief conclusion at the end.

00:01:19

Let's start with the first point, the prejudice. Many of us believe that "old equals lonely, sick and in need of care". This is a prejudice that has persisted for decades. And this prejudice has to do with a theoretical approach, namely the deficit model of old age. This is an image of ageing that is very strongly deficit-oriented and is guided by the idea that older people drop out of society, for example at retirement age, because they are no longer of productive use to society, so to speak.

00:01:56

That is the central assumption, and in addition to that, processes of decline take place in old age, starting with intelligence, cognitive, emotional and social functions and, above all, physical loss. And that is the focus of the deficit model of old age and - as I have just mentioned - that older people naturally make room for younger people and thereby benefit society, so to speak. These are the core propositions of the deficit model of old age. And based on this view, you can imagine what image of old age we often or even regularly have in mind when it comes to older people.

00:02:47

Secondly, I would like to talk about demographic change. You have all heard about this. It means that we have an increase in older people in absolute terms and also as a percentage compared to the total population. This means that the number of older people is increasing, but also the number of very old people has increased by more than 1,000 percent in recent years.

00:03:13

Here you can see the importance and also the consequences of demographic change. That is, we have a considerable increase in older people, over 60 years of age, we have a relatively equal number of people under 20 years of age, and you can see here very well the proportional shift up to the year 2050. In other words, we have considerably more older people and the number of younger people remains almost the same, as can be seen on this slide.

## Übersetzung k09e01

00:03:46

What does that mean? It means that demographic change and its consequences are among the central challenges facing politics, including science, and they affect all policy fields, from transport to nursing care and health to politics itself. And closely linked to demographic change, and this is our main topic today, is diversity in old age. And that will be the next aspect that I will address now.

00:04:21

This pertains to the fact that we have learned in the meantime, especially in connection with demographic change, that old age is very different. There is no such thing as 'old age' and that is why we talk about ageing as a process and not about the calendar age, such as 65 and older.

00:04:41

This means that we are dealing with a very complex and multifaceted process or phase of life. And everyone has their own lifestyles, so to speak, and ageing is different for everyone, which is why we have to view the ageing process very individually in relation to society as a whole, which is why the term diversity is actually very appropriate here.

00:05:09

I have brought some pictures where you can also see this diversity. A book by the former mayor of Bremen, "Grau ist bunt" ("Grey is colourful"), has become very popular. It is supposed to express that age is very diverse, that it is colourful and highly differentiated.

00:05:29

On the one hand, we have to deal with more and more older people who live very actively in the sense of 'active aging', take part in cruises, are active in sports and so on, and enjoy life in very good health, which also means living very individually and self-determined. And as you can see, there are different types of older people, so that the keyword diversity is really very appropriate here.

00:06:04

We have older people who are very cosmopolitan and can therefore be found all over the world, because never before has an age cohort travelled so much, because they also have the necessary financial means, like the current age cohort. That is why older people are really a very cosmopolitan cohort, at least as far as Germany is concerned. We now also have a large number of older people in Germany with a migration background, so that we can speak of a multicultural society in Germany in terms of age.

00:06:41

We also have an increase in health among older people, but at the same time we also see an increase in older people in need of help and nursing, and above all people with dementia. This, too, is a result of demographic change. This means that we can see a parallel structure here, health on the one hand, need for help and nursing on the other.

00:07:05

And we have older people who are poor. We have an increase in old-age poverty in Germany and at the same time we have older people and an old-age cohort that has a lot of money in its account, so to speak, and is one of the richest old-age cohorts or the richest we

## Übersetzung k09e01

have ever had in Germany. I think the picture expresses that very well and, above all, it expresses the diversity and fragmentation or spread in our society.

00:07:39

It is clear, however, that because ageing is very diverse, we have to get away from the deficit model, i.e. age equals sick and in need of care or lonely. And above all, we cannot define age in terms of calendar age, as ageing is a process, a developmental process. So ageing is multidimensional in every respect, biological, psychological, socio-economic, ecological and very variable, depending on lifestyle and life situation.

00:08:12

And we have also developed a competence model, a resource model, which is a second theoretical approach in addition to the deficit model. This means that we assume that older people can be very active or even are very active and live their lives in a very self-determined way and also in a very responsible way, so they live their lives in a self-responsible way, they are in no way dependent because they are ill or in need of care. This might be true for a part of the elderly, but an even larger part is very competent and has a lot of resources. And these can even be acquired in old age through education, through learning in old age, i.e. lifelong learning, so that in the end ageing is a dynamic process with many development opportunities.

00:09:05

Now there are various examples that one could mention that are relevant for ageing. Here I have chosen the example of housing. This means that just as ageing is diverse, diverse forms of housing are also conceivable and the conceptualisation of diverse or new forms of housing is also imaginable. And in this respect, this seemed to be a very good example to me to show you the variety, the diversity of ageing. This means that just as we have a wide variety of life situations and coping styles in ageing, we also need a variety of forms of living and housing. And this is where I see a challenge, a problem, in the future, because we have a very standardised housing market for older people, especially when you think of inpatient long-term care, i.e. nursing homes, which are very standardised, but also assisted living and other forms of housing. And there is a danger here that personal responsibility and self-determination of older people cannot always be guaranteed by these standardised forms of housing when it comes to maintaining autonomy, personal responsibility and self-determination. And that is why these three terms should actually be the guiding principles for housing issues of older people if diversity is to be preserved and, above all, if individuality is to be preserved in old age. Here, housing is a very good example and also a very important example of where this must be guaranteed.

00:10:49

And you can see here the different ways of living that we currently have, starting with one's own home to multi-generational living, assisted living to senior residences, neighbourhood communities and so on. So we have to maintain this diversity, or even promote it, first of all because ageing is also very diverse and it has to be compatible, so to speak. That's why we need new housing options for the elderly in society, and I think this must be promoted much more strongly politically.

## Übersetzung k09e01

00:11:28

That is why future challenges must be directed or projected above all to the municipalities. Because the municipalities are the platforms where people live, where older people live and design their diversity together with others. And here we have to conclude that cities and municipalities in Germany are not sufficiently prepared for this diversity and these challenges of an ageing society, not only in terms of housing, but overall. Although we have been living with this megatrend – and demographic change is a megatrend - for a long time, the municipalities still have a lot to learn and, above all, they have to take on much more responsibility when it comes to developing housing options, but also old age in general.

00:12:19

A conclusion at the end. What we know from research is that on average we are experiencing healthy ageing today. We have very educated older people, very active older people, compared to previous generations. Which does not mean that we do not also have sick people and people in need of nursing. So we always have a spread, but the trend clearly points to an improvement compared to earlier age cohorts.

00:12:51

We also have the scientific knowledge that life situations in old age are very different, very diverse. And that is why we also need to have images of old age that do justice to this diversity and do not have this image of old age in our minds that ageing means deficit. So we need a differentiated perception of ageing, which means that the calendar age alone does not allow us to draw conclusions about potentials, competences and resources in old age, but we have to understand age as a development process. In other words, older people age very differently, and this diverse ageing is associated with many opportunities. And these must be perceived much more strongly in our culture, for example also in companies, when it comes to continuing to employ older people, for example in the sense of voluntary work, and in many other ways, including housing.

00:13:55

I have noted down further literature for you on the last slides, these are standard works by gerontologists or nursing scientists from Germany that prepare you very well for this topic of diversity, but also for further theories or the theoretical approaches mentioned, as well as for the topic of demographic change and ageing in general.

00:14:22

With that, I thank you for listening and hope you enjoy studying this topic and others. Thank you very much!