

## Übersetzung k09e03

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Welcome to the session "Older Workers - Ageism in the World of Work" of the eGeneral Studies event "Diversity Competences". My name is Moritz Hess, I am a research assistant at the SOCIUM Research Centre on Inequality and Social Policy at the University of Bremen. And I will guide you through the next 15 minutes.

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What are the learning objectives of today's session? First, you should have an overview of what demographic ageing is and what its consequences are for our societies. Secondly, you should have a basic understanding of the term ageism, age discrimination. And thirdly, you should have a basic understanding of what ageism means in the world of work.

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About the structure: I will first introduce demographic ageing, demographic change, then give a short definition of what ageism is, and then I will talk about ageism in the world of work specifically. To that end, we will first talk about older workers in general, then about ageism and older workers, finally about ageism and older unemployed people and at the end there will be a summary of the whole session.

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To show you what demographic ageing means for us, I have brought you an animation and I now invite you to travel back in time to the year 1901.

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Each of these dots represents a country. The larger the dot, the more populous the country. As early as 1901, the two most populous countries in the world are China and India. China is the largest red dot, India the second largest red dot.

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Red dots are Asian countries, yellow dots are European countries, green dots are North and South American countries and blue dots are African countries.

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On the Y-axis you can see the fertility rate, that is the number of children per woman. On the X-axis you can see life expectancy in years and what you can observe here is that in 1901 life expectancy was, let's say, around 30 years and the fertility rate was around 5 to 6 children per woman. You can see that a couple of countries have separated themselves at the front, these are the USA and Canada, France and England, where there is already a bit higher life expectancy, a bit lower fertility rate, but overall we have a life expectancy of just over 30 and a fertility rate of just under 5. Once the animation starts, you will see that the countries will slowly but surely move downwards to the right. That means fertility will go down and life expectancy will go up. But we will also observe the disasters of the last century. That will be, for example, the Spanish flu, many millions of deaths, and life expectancy will go down accordingly. The First World War has also already taken place. Now we will slide into the second catastrophe of the last century, the Second World War. That was just the Russian Civil War, millions of deaths, which then of course leads to a significant decrease in life expectancy. That has just taken place.

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But we still see that the whole world is moving downwards to the right. Fertilities are going

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down, life expectancy is going up. That's Mao's Great Leap Forward, millions of hunger related deaths in China, life expectancies going down accordingly. Ahead we see how Japan, that is the red dot, the US and the European countries are moving away. Now Mao has implemented the one-child policy in China, the fertility rate is clearly going down. We are moving further and further towards the new millennium. We see that the bubbles are growing, which means countries are gaining population, have a clear movement downwards and to the right. Now we have arrived at the new millennium. India and China are also clearly moving towards higher life expectancies. We can now observe a general trend towards higher life expectancies and low fertilities.

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In 2015, we now have, let's say, an average life expectancy of about 70 and a fertility of about two. Three things we should take away from this animation: first of all, the incredible changes that have taken place there. Life expectancy has more than doubled from 30 to 70, fertility has gone down from five to about two. Secondly, in a relatively short period of time, from 1901 to 2015, some people live more than 114 years, so in the life span of one person, this change has taken place. And thirdly, demographic change, demographic ageing is not a European and North American phenomenon, it is a global phenomenon. Ageing is also taking place in China, also in India. The oldest country in the world is an Asian one, namely Japan. And the fastest ageing country in the world is also an Asian one, and it is South Korea.

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Let's zoom in on Germany now. What I have brought you here are the classic age pyramids. In 1970 you can see - the black bars are the men, the grey bars the women - how many people live there per year. And here you can clearly see that there are more younger people, the bars are wider at the bottom than at the top. So we have, you could say, an age pyramid, with relatively many young people at the bottom, as opposed to relatively few old people. This is changing - of course, it must be stressed here that these are forecasts from 2030 onwards - to the extent that we have fewer young people and more older people. We could speak of an age kebab, with relatively few young people at the bottom and relatively many old people at the top. And this is of course completely contrary to the age pyramid with few young people and many old people further up.

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What does this mean for us now? Demographic ageing has clear consequences for our societies, including Germany. The number of older people is rising, both in absolute and relative terms. This means that we no longer just have one million older people, for example, but two million older people - but also in relative terms, which means that the proportion of older people in the population is increasing as well.

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Forecasts by the German Federal Statistical Office show that the median age will increase significantly. The median age is the age at which 50 percent of the population is younger and 50 percent of the population is older. And what you can clearly see in these figures is that between 1970 and, again from 2030 onwards these are projections, the median age will increase significantly from about 34 in 1970 to 50/51 in 2060. That means we have a significant increase in the number of older people.

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What does this mean for ageism, for the topic of age discrimination? Well, the increasing number of older people will put the issue of ageism very, very much in the focus of science, politics and society. The issue will become more and more important. Ageism has been defined for the first time by Butler who says: Ageism is the prejudice of an age group against an age group. Ageism can actually also take place towards younger people - that is, older people can also discriminate against younger people, older people can also be prejudiced against younger people. In the course of the following presentation, however, I will indeed focus on ageism, age discrimination and age stereotypes against older people.

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There are studies that show that ageism towards older people is the most widespread form of discrimination in Europe, even before sexism, before homophobia and before racism. This means that the topic of age discrimination, the topic of ageism, is of highest relevance socially, scientifically and also politically.

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Ageism takes place in virtually all areas of life. In the health system, for example, there are some voices that argue that we should no longer allow certain treatments from a specific age onwards because this saves money. In the media, the classic image still prevails that young equals good, old equals bad, young people are represented, anti-ageing creams are promoted, the theme of young and dynamic is still the focus in the media. In the financial system, it can be difficult for older people to get loans, for example, because banks, because lenders say that the risk of default is too high for me due to illness or death, so unfortunately I cannot grant a loan here, which means that age discrimination also takes place in the financial system.

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One area where age discrimination is very widespread is the labour market. And this is also what I will focus on further in the following part of the session. On the topic of the labour market, it can be said that in Germany the number of older workers has increased significantly over the last 15 years. There are four reasons for this, a generally robust development of the labour market, which can also be seen, for example, in the fact that unemployment figures have generally gone down. There are cohort effects, today's older workers are better educated and healthier than their predecessors. Thirdly, we have a general increase in female employment. And fourth, pension and labour market reforms have been introduced that aim to make people leave the labour force later and retire later. A very simple example here would be the pension at 67, which raised the standard age limit from 65 to 67.

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Here is a graph on the development of employment rates of older people and also the actual retirement age and here you can clearly see that for both men and women the employment rate has gone up. This means that more older people are working and this is also taking place for the retirement age. This is the age at which people really retire, where we can also see a clear increase. And that again shows how important the issue of ageism is in the labour market, in the workplace. We should really deal with it.

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Older workers experience many stereotypes in the world of work. They are seen as less productive, for example they are not expected to work at the same speed on the conveyor belt as younger workers. They are seen as less adaptable, less likely to learn new software. Some studies also show that they are seen as unwilling to learn. Thirdly, older people are also seen as more susceptible to illness. It is said that absenteeism due to illness is higher and is also longer. On the other hand, there are also positive stereotypes. Older people are seen as more experienced compared to their younger colleagues and also more reliable.

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Researchers do not really agree on how much truth there is in these stereotypes. In summary, however, it can be said that most of the stereotypes are not true, or only to a very, very small extent.

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It should be emphasised here that these stereotypes are not only formed and maintained by the superiors of older workers and by their colleagues, but in part the older workers also stereotype themselves as less productive, less adaptable.

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However, older people not only experience stereotypes in the world of work, they are also discriminated against. This means that they not only have to deal with a negative perception of themselves, but they are also treated worse. Examples of this are denied promotions, for example, person A and person B apply for a promotion within the company and person A then gets the promotion only because they are younger or because person B is older.

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Older people are also excluded from further training in companies. This is very much related to the second stereotype that older people are less adaptable, less able to learn. Here people say that they cannot learn anything new anyway, that it is no longer worth investing in them and that is why they are excluded from further training.

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The third example of discrimination against older workers is forced retirement. It is still the case that older people are actually forced out of companies into retirement and that this is partly involuntary.

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And all these three examples really take place only on the basis of a fixed chronological age and are independent of a person's actual performance. This means that we can state here: Older people experience stereotypes in the world of work, but they are also discriminated against.

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One group that is very, very much affected by discrimination and ageism in the world of work is older unemployed people. Especially when looking for new jobs, they are disadvantaged because of their age. A typical example is that they are less likely to be invited to training courses and are less likely to be offered such courses by employment agencies. But they are also discriminated against during the job interview, when they are invited to the interview. Here, studies from Germany with discrimination experiments show

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that they have a 28 percent lower response rate. That means that applications are sent out that are absolutely identical - one application has an older applicant, the other application has a younger applicant. And the younger applicant has a 28 percent higher probability of being invited for an interview.

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These two examples, the exclusion from further education and training and also the lower chance of being invited to job interviews, mean that older workers are unemployed much longer than their younger colleagues. And this is a clear indication, or one could even say proof, of ageism, of age discrimination in the world of work.

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What can we do to reduce ageism, to fight ageism? First of all, we need to recognise that ageism is an important issue. This should take place on a political level, on a company level and also on an individual level. In companies, we can try to create a working atmosphere, a corporate identity that is free from ageism.

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Examples of this would be a language free of age discrimination. That is, we should not speak of young, dynamic teams, we should not create job advertisements looking for young applicants, instead the subject of age should be banished from the language, so to speak, in quotation marks.

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A second example of what companies could do is to have mixed-age teams. We should try to form teams in such a way that there are always younger and older workers in the team, so that they can interact with each other and so that stereotypes that people have of each other can be deconstructed.

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Note that there is no model solution for all companies, but that each company must develop individual solutions. In doing so, they should be supported by the state. Company measures that, excuse me, state measures that could flank the company measures would be, for example, the recognition that ageism is an important topic, politicians should talk about the topic of ageism. Furthermore, we could, for example, think about the idea that the state, as is already the case in other countries, ensures that age may no longer be stated in job applications and thus discrimination on the basis of age can no longer take place, at least in the application process. These are a few examples of how ageism can be reduced in the world of work.

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To summarise: Demographic change will lead to an increase in the number of older workers. This will bring the issue of ageism, age discrimination in the world of work into focus and ageism is taking place in many areas of the world of work. I would add here that we are not powerless in the face of this, but can actually do something against ageism in the world of work.

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That brings me to the end, thank you for your attention and I am providing some more resources and further references on the next slide.