

## CONTEXTUALISING AGEISM IN AN INTERDISCIPLINARY PERSPECTIVE AN INTRODUCTION

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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 fundamentals 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 Vidovičová 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." (Vidovičová, 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.<sup>1</sup>

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

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

geographical area in which they live (Gramshammer-Hohl, 2017; Kriiebernegg, Maierhofer & Ratzenböck, 2014; Kriiebernegg, 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.<sup>2</sup> 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

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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.”<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>. 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<sup>5</sup> 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.<sup>6</sup> 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](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](http://www.cost.eu/COST_Actions/isch/IS1402). [www.notoageism.com](http://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<sup>7</sup> 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

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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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