



Are societies with a high value on the Active Ageing Index more age integrated?

Pearl A. Dykstra & Maria S. Fleischmann

Active Ageing Index – International Seminar
Brussels, 16-17 April 2015

Background (1)

Point of departure: age segregation, i.e. separation of age groups in society

Neglected topic, apart from research on

- “generation gap” (’60s and ’70s)
- “age wars” (’80s onwards)

Separation of age groups is produced and reinforced by the “tripartite” life course (Kohli, 1985; Riley & Riley, 1994)

Reason for concern about age segregation: production and reproduction of ageism (Hagestad & Uhlenberg, 2005a, 2005b)



Background (2)

Turning argument around: ageism might be reduced through cross-age interaction (cf. Allport, 1954)

Cross-age interaction is an under-researched topic (Riley, 2000)

Perhaps because homophily is a tenet of relationship research

Some societies may be more age integrated than others (Uhlenberg, 2000)

But this issue has not been pursued

Our interest: are high AAI societies more age integrated?

- Conditions enabling cross-age interaction, and thus
- Promoting a better understanding of people of different ages



Background (3)

Appropriate data: round 4 of the ESS (2008)

50-item module on “experiences and expressions of ageism” prepared by Abrams, Lima & Courdin

Cross-age friendship

“About how many friends, other than members of your family, do you have who are younger than 30? (aged over 70?)” (0, 1, 2-5, 6-9, 10 or more)

Ageism

“Overall, how negative or positive do you feel towards people in their 20s? (over 70?)” (0 = extremely negative, 10 = extremely positive)



Objectives of this study are to identify:

- conditions at the individual and country level that encourage cross-age friendship
- whether having friends who differ in age reduces ageist attitudes that young people [old people] have of old people [young people]
- whether the AA indicators contribute to an explanation of the prevalence of cross-age friendship, and of ageism, over and above the individual-level indicators.



Theoretical framework (1)

First key principle: there is “no mating without meeting” (e.g., Blau, 1977)

Individual level

Those whose daily activities are in settings enabling cross-age interaction are more likely to report cross-age friendships (H1)

Examples of such settings: family, paid work, volunteer work, and religious organizations

Country level

societal forces structuring opportunities for cross-age interactions that cannot be reduced to the settings in which people perform their daily activities

Examples of such forces: policies, laws, mass media depictions, and social norms

Theoretical framework (2)

The AAI (Zaidi et al., 2013)

- acknowledges that people are affected by multiple jurisdictions at once (cf. Campbell, 2012)
- provides an accumulated appraisal of the ways in which policies, laws, mass media depictions, and social norms produce and reflect age barriers

A higher value on the Active Ageing Index increases the likelihood of reporting cross-age friendships (H2)

We consider

- overall AAI, as well as
- the separate indicators



Theoretical framework (3)

Second key principle: durable interactions with people of different ages foster mutual understanding (e.g., Pettigrew, 1998)

Those who report cross-age friendships are less ageist than those who do not report having cross-age friendships (H3)

Method

ESS-4; 25 EU countries (no ESS in IT, LU, MT)

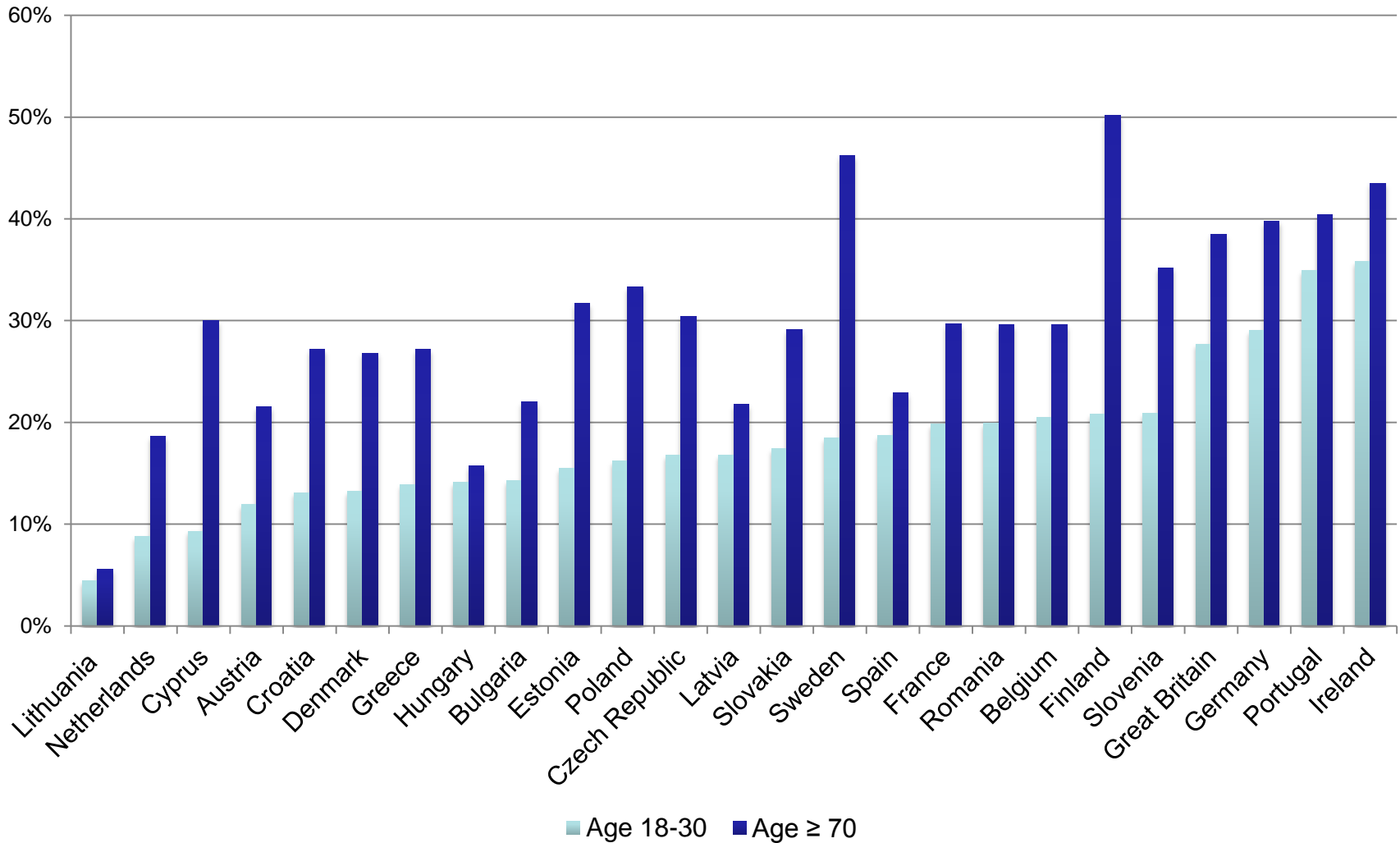
Focus on respondents < 30 (N~8700), and ≥ 70 (N~6600)

Multilevel logistic regression (dependent variable: ≥ 2 friends under 30 / over 70)

Multilevel linear regression (dependent variable: log of ageism, higher score = more ageist)

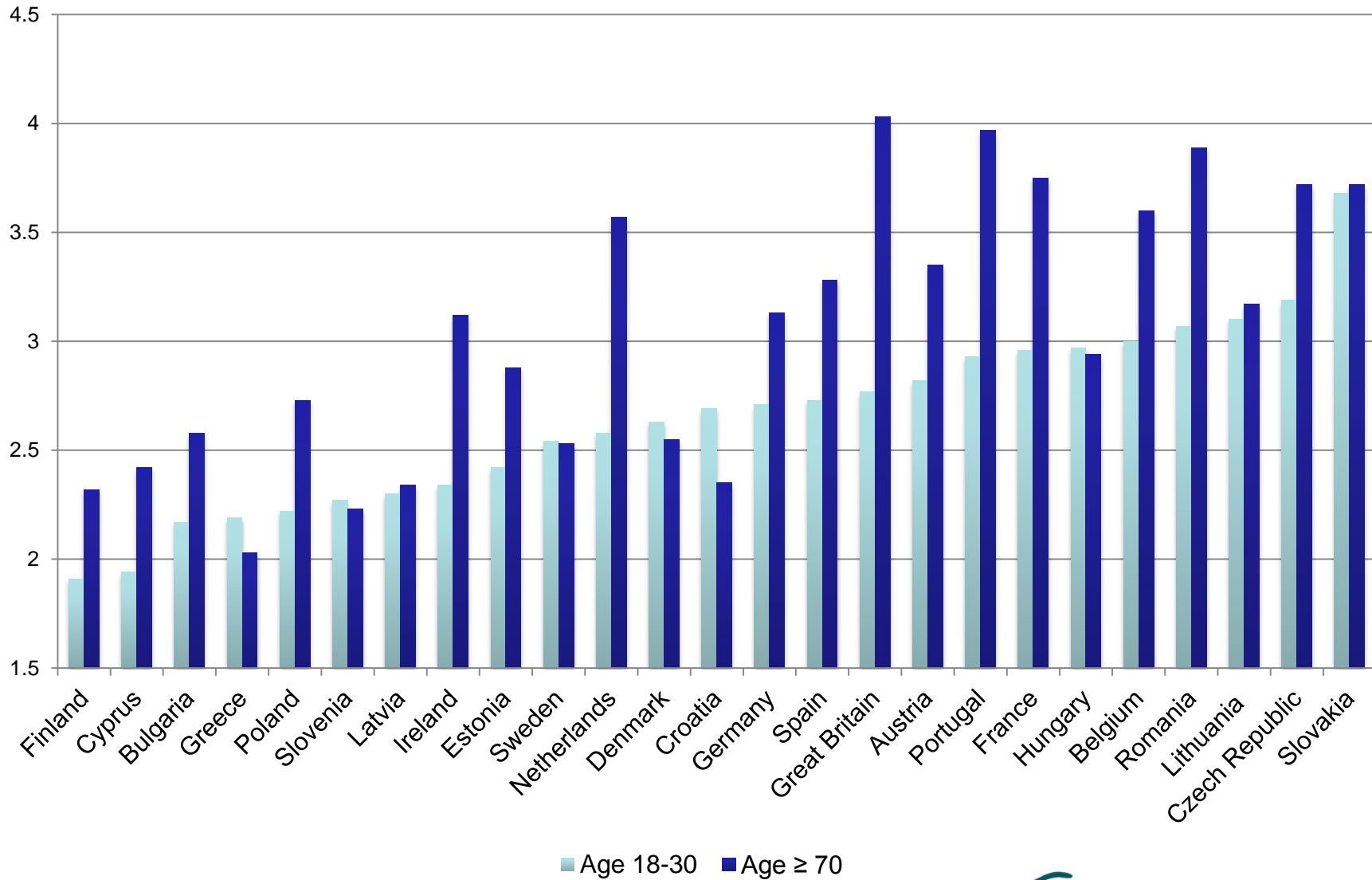


2 or more cross-age friendships





Ageism score (0-10)



Predicting cross-age friendships for young (N = 8716)

	Model 1	Model 2-5
	Exp(b)	Exp(b)
<u>Individual level</u>		
Has household member >70	1.388*	1.381*
Discusses personal issues with family member >70	1.684***	1.689***
Attended religious service at least monthly	1.648***	1.642***
Did paid or voluntary work past month	1.064	1.067
Worked with colleagues or volunteers in their 70s	2.718***	2.719***
Gender (female=1)	0.816***	0.816***
Age (years)	1.006	1.005
Lives with partner	1.226**	1.228**
Health (1-5)	0.933	0.933
<u>Country level</u>		
AAI: Overall	1.017	
AAI: Employment (Model 2)		1.013
AAI: Social participation (Model 3)		1.002
AAI: Independent, healthy and secure living (Model 4)		1.015
AAI: Capacity and enabling environment (Model 5)		1.011



Predicting cross-age friendships for old (N = 6697)

	Model 1	Models 2-5
	Exp(b)	Exp(b)
<u>Individual level</u>		
Has household member <30	1.357*	1.450*
Discusses personal issues with (grand)child	1.129*	1.144*
Attended religious service at least monthly	1.386***	1.415***
Did paid or voluntary work past month	1.381**	1.344**
Worked with colleagues or volunteers in their 20s	2.076***	2.006***
Gender (female=1)	0.781***	0.764***
Age (years)	0.966***	0.961***
Lives with partner	1.200**	1.194**
Health (1-5)	1.315***	0.787***
<u>Country level</u>		
AAI: Overall	1.021	
AAI: Employment (Model 2)		1.020
AAI: Social participation (Model 3)		1.004
AAI: Independent, healthy and secure living (Model 4)		1.019
AAI: Capacity and enabling environment (Model 5)		1.013



Predicting ageism of the young towards the old (N = 8612)

	Model 1	Models 2-5
	B	B
<u>Individual level</u>		
Has household member >70	0.017	-0.004
Discusses personal issues with family member >70	-0.052***	-0.052***
Attends religious services at least monthly	-0.072***	-0.076***
Did paid or volunteer work past month	-0.027	-0.033*
Worked with colleagues or volunteers in their 70s	-0.014	-0.054*
Gender (female=1)	-0.109***	-0.109***
Age (years)	-0.005**	-0.005*
Lives with partner	-0.018	-0.023
Health (1-5)	-0.054***	0.045***
Has ≥2 friends above age 70	-0.089***	-0.100***
<u>Country level</u>		
AAI: Overall	0.000	
AAI: Employment (Model 2)		-0.005
AAI: Social participation (Model 3)		-0.001
AAI: Independent, healthy and secure living (Model 4)		0.004
AAI: Capacity and enabling environment (Model 5)		0.002
Constant	1.576***	1.577***



Predicting ageism of the old towards the young (N = 6512)

	Model 1 B	Models 2-5 B
<u>Individual level</u>		
Has household member <30	0.022	0.021
Discusses personal issues with (grand)child	-0.083***	-0.084***
Attends religious services at least monthly	0.003	0.002
Did paid or volunteer work past month	-0.027	-0.025
Worked with colleagues or volunteers in their 20s	-0.037	-0.038
Gender (female=1)	-0.101***	-0.100***
Age (years)	0.000	0.000
Lives with partner	-0.011	-0.011
Health (1-5)	-0.056***	-0.055***
Has ≥2 friends below age 30	-0.069***	-0.068***
<u>Country level</u>		
AAI: Overall	0.007	
AAI: Employment (Model 2)		-0.000
AAI: Social participation (Model 3)		0.003
AAI: Independent, healthy and secure living (Model 4)		0.009*
AAI: Capacity and enabling environment (Model 5)		0.005
Constant	1.476***	1.467***



Conclusions (1)

- Settings for daily activities are good predictors of the likelihood of having cross-age friendships (as expected)
- AA-indicators do not predict the likelihood of having cross-age friendships (not as expected)
- People with cross-age friendships tend to be less ageist (as expected)
- AA indicators show no associations with ageism (with one exception)
- Lack of significant findings for AA-indicators is robust

Conclusions (2)

- The consideration of both young and old is rather unique
- The young seem to be somewhat more cloistered in age-homogeneous institutions than the old
- Is this “cloistering” the reason for greater ageism towards the young than towards the old?
- Unfortunately, we cannot conclude that societies with a high value on the AAI are more age integrated
- Nevertheless, our findings underscore the importance of settings enabling durable interactions between young and old
- And conceivably, high AAI countries create such settings

Acknowledgments

Financial support for our research comes from

- European Research Council Advanced Investigator Grant (ERC, 324211) “Families in Context”
- Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research TOP grant (NWO, 407-13-021) “Sustaining Employability”

Further information?

dykstra@fsw.eur.nl / fleischmann@fsw.eur.nl