



“Ageing 4.0” Towards a more integrated life-course approach to population ageing

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Overview

- Population ageing as an opportunity
 - Unleashing related potentials
- New challenges for cross-sectional statutory policies
 - Rising longevity, new technologies ('Industry 4.0')
- The concept of 'Ageing 4.0'
 - Adapting welfare states to new social risks over the life course

We tend to talk about ...

- A demographic 'time bomb'
- Rising 'dependency rates'
- Public expenditure on ageing policies (pensions, health care)
- Too low fertility rates
- Lower productivity of a greying workforce
- The 'lump of labour fallacy' ...



We should talk about ...

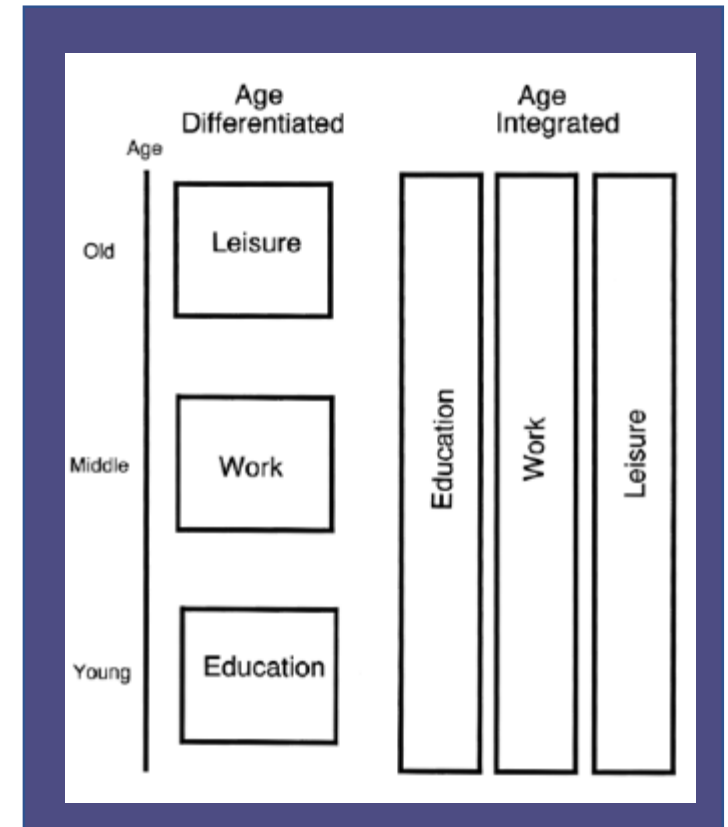
- New individual and societal choices and opportunities
- New technologies and products:
 - robotics, sensing, internet of things, smart homes, robotics ...
- New types of health and social care organisation and delivery (long-term care)
- New urban development
- New patterns of work, learning and leisure ...



From age differentiation to age integration

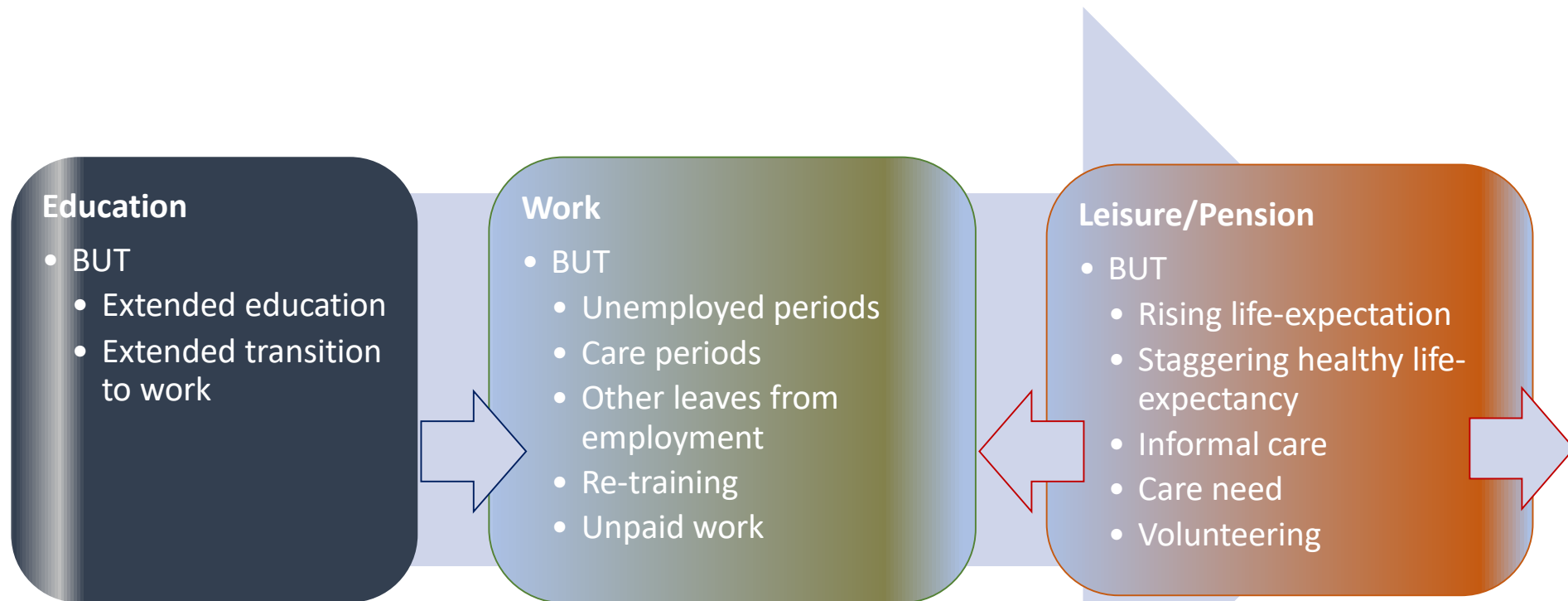
Is the differentiated life-course model still applicable?

- The assignment of tasks and activities to defined age brackets has become outdated
- The age-integrated model conceives of activities as taking place simultaneously, rather than subsequently



Source: Riley & Riley, 2000: 267

The continuous disintegration of traditional life-course patterns (age differentiation)



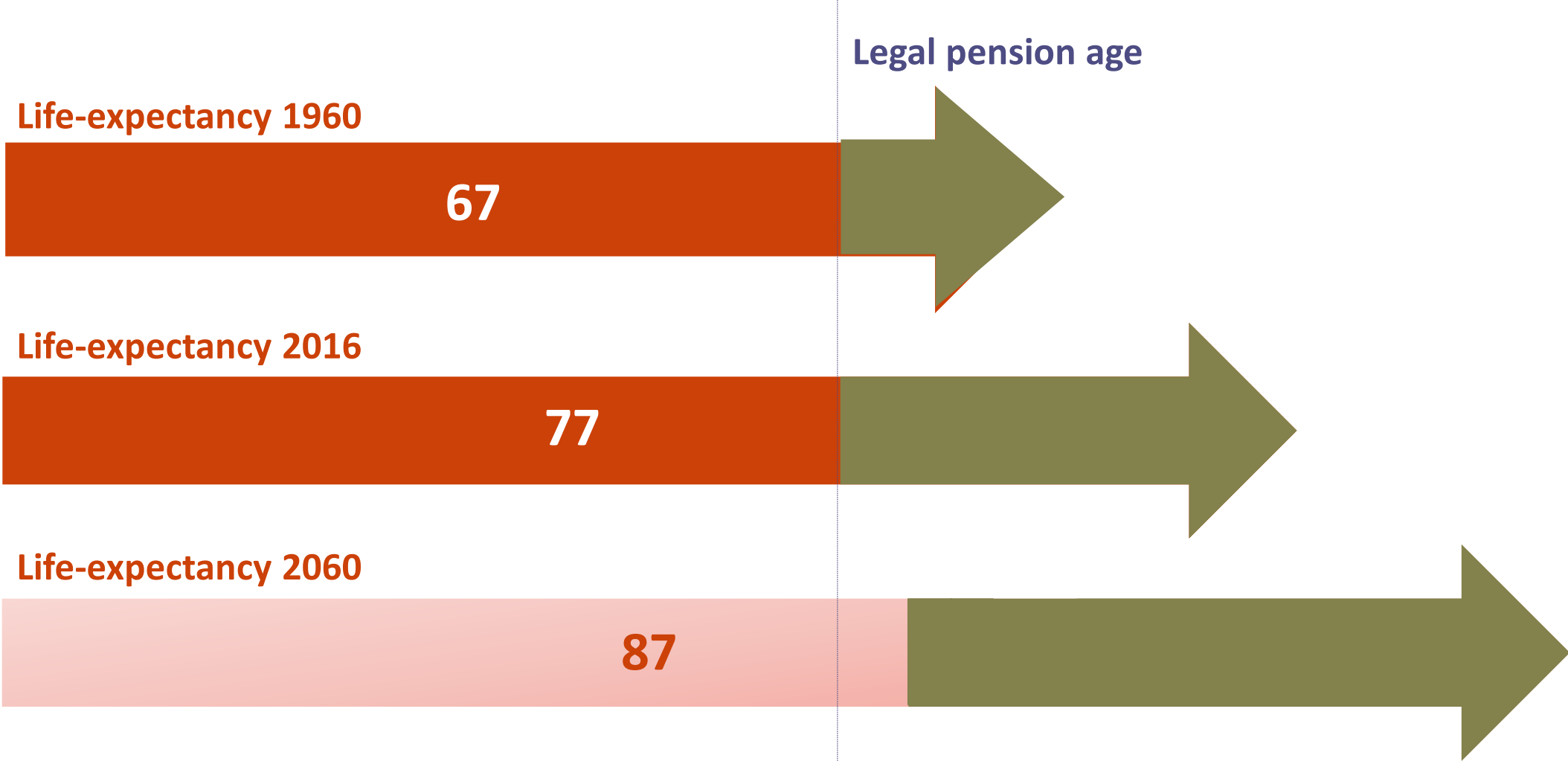
The solicitations of policies addressing population ageing

- Life-long learning
 - But: social selectivity of basic and further education systems
- Active and healthy ageing
 - But: extending working lives with unequal chances and inequities due to cumulated disadvantages over the life course
 - Normative concept of 'staying healthy' ('successful ageing')
- Reconciliation of work and family life
 - Child care and care for older family members, work-life balance

Paid work as the unique means for social inclusion?

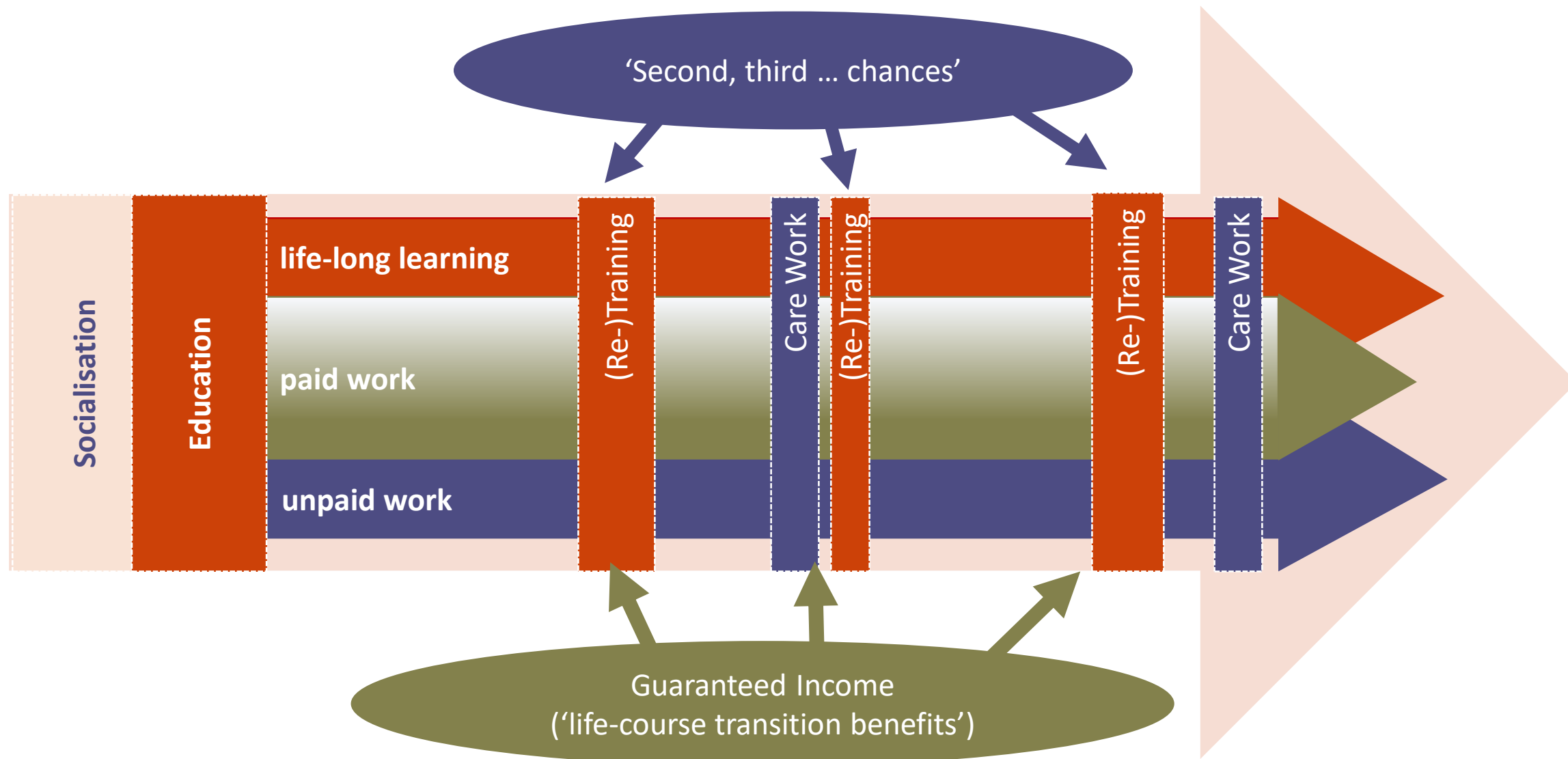
- Unpaid work as the 'lucky finding' of capitalism
- Unpaid household work remains 'female'
- Volunteering as yet another solicitation of policies
 - Volunteering needs to be underpinned by capacity-building and local organisations providing supportive structural resources

Longer lives as an opportunity for new types of life-courses



Source: UN data, <http://data.un.org/>

Ageing 4.0: Integrated life-course perspectives in a society characterized by solidarity



Anticipating future life-course developments: Ageing 4.0

- Facilitating new trajectories and transitions
 - Between paid/unpaid work
 - Between education/training and paid work
 - Between family obligations and work/leisure
- Incentives for 're-training', 'upgrading courses', 'care leaves'
 - Every x years with rights and obligations (further education account, income secured)
- Facilitating inter-generational equity
 - Providing 'second, third ... chances'

Ageing 4.0 to combat rising inequalities

Inequalities and inequities are in most cases based on lack of education and lack of 'second chances' over the life-course.

Examples for preventive and enabling interventions:

- Early childhood education and support, new types of learning and schooling, education guarantee for adolescents (avoidance of NEETs), Re-training as part of Active Labour Market Policies (Job/Training Foundations) ...
- Reforms have contributed to new, but individualised trajectories with unequal opportunities

Ageing 4.0 calls for a new welfare state

Individual life courses and the welfare state in a broader sense are inextricably linked

- Norms are constructing the life-course by determining the chronological age at which people are in education, how long they are in training, and when they retire
- New risks, new trajectories, new transitions – differing according to access and rights to minimum income, education, housing, health ... (welfare regimes)
 - Direct impact: e.g. start/end of formal education, retirement age
 - Indirect impact: social norms regarding age of marriage, cultures of care, having children, gendered divide between paid/unpaid work ...

Sources: Mayer and Schoepflin, 1989; Kohli, 2007

Ageing 4.0 to address new social risks in transitions over the life-course

- **Risk distribution** characterized by solidarity, rather than by individualised risk management (inequality), does not mean to get rid of individual responsibilities
- Reduction of **gendered life-course perspectives**
- Acknowledgement of **unpaid reproduction work**
- Adaptation to **technology-induced challenges**: skills development
- Equalization of **demand and supply patterns** (consumer and labour markets)
- **Facilitating transitions** (school to work, care to work, work to training ...)
- Facilitating a **new 'generational contract'**

Ageing 4.0: Cost-benefit considerations

Micro level (individuals):

- Flexibility and openness for change required
- + Gains throughout careers from better qualification and work-life balance

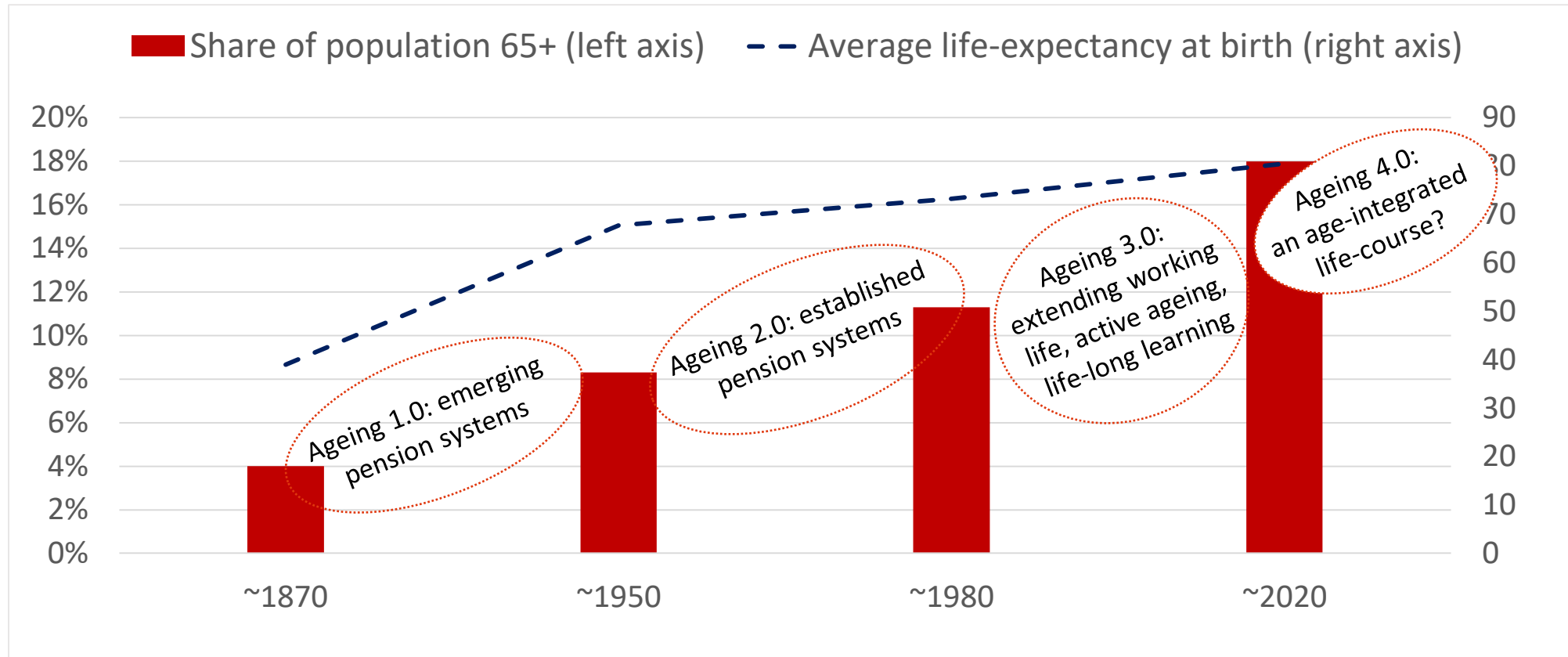
Meso level (companies):

- Flexible solutions for (planned) absences for leaves (child care, care for older kin, education/training) are needed
- + Family-friendly policies increase productivity, job satisfaction and motivation, reduce absenteeism

Macro level (society):

- Increasing productivity and motivation, facilitating work at higher ages
- + Social investments required to provide income security and support during (educational) leaves and periods of 'unpaid reproduction work'

Ageing 4.0 in a historical perspective



Source: Leichsenring, 2018

Action needed

Embarking into the paradigm change

- Changing narratives: combining economics, demography, social gerontology and social policy
- Working across all sectors and levels of governance
- Including both paid and unpaid labour
- Shifting values

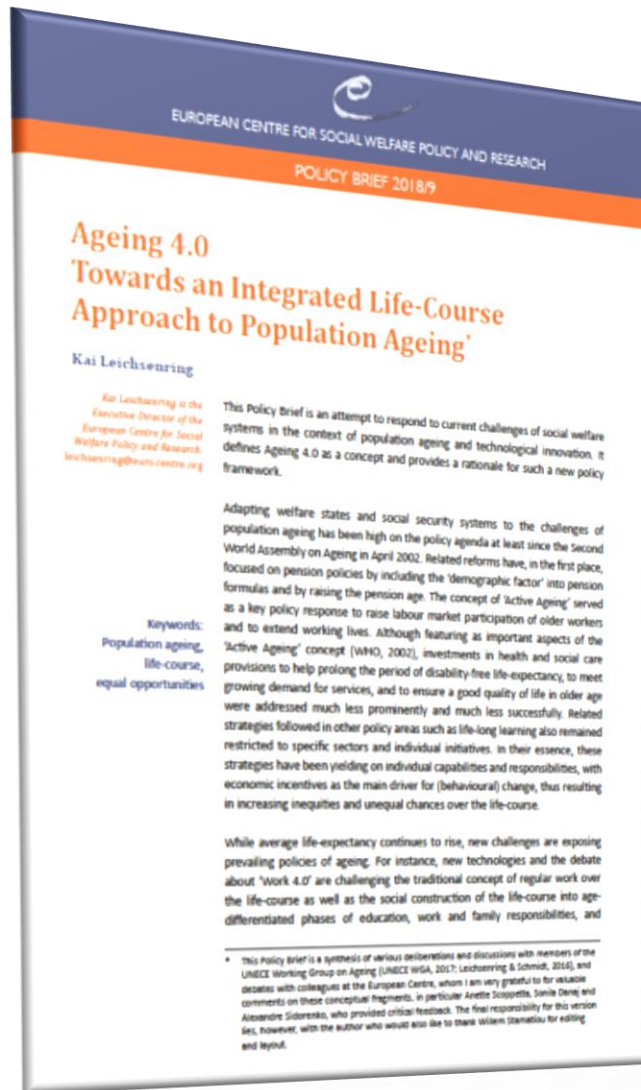
Tackle old-age poverty and inequalities

- A life-course perspective, including cumulative inequalities

Designing social investment and new welfare

- Preventative, participative, inclusive, creating values for the individual and the community: from 'ego' to 'eco'

Further reading



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Ageing 4.0 Towards an Integrated Life-Course Approach to Population Ageing*

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This Policy Brief is an attempt to respond to current challenges of social welfare systems in the context of population ageing and technological innovation. It defines Ageing 4.0 as a concept and provides a rationale for such a new policy framework.

Adapting welfare states and social security systems to the challenges of population ageing has been high on the policy agenda at least since the Second World Assembly on Ageing in April 2002. Related reforms have, in the first place, focused on pension policies by including the 'demographic factor' into pension formulas and by raising the pension age. The concept of 'Active Ageing' served as a key policy response to raise labour market participation of older workers and to extend working lives. Although featuring as important aspects of the 'Active Ageing' concept (WHO, 2002), investments in health and social care provisions to help prolong the period of disability-free life-expectancy, to meet growing demand for services, and to ensure a good quality of life in older age were addressed much less prominently and much less successfully. Related strategies followed in other policy areas such as life-long learning also remained restricted to specific sectors and individual initiatives. In their essence, these strategies have been yielding on individual capabilities and responsibilities, with economic incentives as the main driver for (behavioural) change, thus resulting in increasing inequities and unequal chances over the life-course.

Keywords:
Population ageing,
life-course,
equal opportunities

While average life-expectancy continues to rise, new challenges are exposing prevailing policies of ageing. For instance, new technologies and the debate about 'Work 4.0' are challenging the traditional concept of regular work over the life-course as well as the social construction of the life-course into age-differentiated phases of education, work and family responsibilities, and

* This Policy Brief is a synthesis of various deliberations and discussions with members of the UNICEE Working Group on Ageing (UNICEE Work, 2017; Leichsenring & Schmidt, 2016), and decades with colleagues at the European Centre, whom I am very grateful to for valuable comments on these conceptual fragments. In particular Anette Scopetta, Janice Deneq and Alexander Slobrenko, who provided critical feedback. The final responsibility for this version lies, however, with the author who would also like to thank Willem Stamatiou for editing and layout.