

Ageism and social norms imposed by the state

[Sociology](#), [Social Issues](#)



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Whatever the inequality is, I want to focus on age restrictions and discrimination. Imagine your own transition to adulthood. After all, this period is accompanied not only by established social formal and informal restrictions, but the process of growing up is also associated with ageism. People are struggling because of age restrictions and inequality. After all, the aging process can affect your lifestyle and career.

Ageism as a term was coined in 1968 by gerontologist (specialist in diseases of older people), psychiatrist and Pulitzer prize winner Robert Butler. Ageism is discrimination against people on the basis of age. A good example of the study of ageism, and identity is the study of S. Matthew (Elder, 2018, 1994). She studied identity management among older women facing social stigma of them as infirm, worthless, decrepit. The second classic work in this direction is “ Living and dying at Murray Manor” (Gubrium, 2012). It uses the phenomenological concept of “ social worlds” to show the life of the organization - a private sanatorium through various “ worlds of meaning” based on the social status of administrative staff, nurses and elderly people, determining their own meaning of old age and death.

In this way, modern government has to reduce ageism to make socialisation and transition easier. Society should be less unequal than it is. People wish to have equal abilities to have a higher degree education, career promotion, high quality medicine for children as well as for older people, well paid jobs, having social benefits and respect.

Formal Age Norms

Nevertheless, it is not only age discrimination that leads to inequality. Some formal, or “ official” norms limit the behaviour of people on the basis of age as well. It is a well-known fact, 16 and 17-year olds won't be able to vote until they turn 18. In most States of the US, twenty-year-olds are not allowed to buy alcohol, but they are allowed to do so at 21. In Mexico, it is allowed to buy alcohol from the age of 18, so some American students are forced to travel to drink and have fun. Working people are allowed to continue their employment until the age of 65 (or 67 or 70). In the future, they usually retire. A good example of formal age norms is the transition of students from one class to another in accordance with their age (if their abilities are generally not below or above the average age level). Also, there are formal restrictions not only on viewing pornography or horror movies, but there are also age restrictions on video games.

Informal age norms

Other age norms are less clearly defined. The age of leaving school, getting married, having children and starting a job is not precisely set. We have restrictions on the age of sexual consent and the age at which you can work, but some start doing it earlier. However, in our society there are quite

definite ideas about when these events should occur (Neugarten, Moore, Lowe, 1965). For example, it is assumed that after graduating from high school (at the age of about 18), people should immediately look for work or continue to College. In fact, research suggests that there is a “social clock” or a kind of “schedule” that tells people whether their lives are shaping up according to the conventional pattern. They probably feel anxious about falling behind on this schedule. Sometimes, in order to “keep up with others”, they make tragic mistakes in their lives (Neugarten, Datan, 1973). Recently, many young people (who are about 30 years old) who entered low-paid jobs (at first it was for them part of the “alternative” way of life), began to feel anxious and joined political programs, hoping to find more responsible positions.

Policy Changes to Reduce the Long Shadow of Inequality

In modern socially oriented States (welfare states), age stratification plays a significant role because it affects the distribution of public goods. The extent and direction of intergenerational transfers (Sloan, Zhang, Wang, 2002), intergenerational contract in society and families (Bengtson, Achenbaum, 1993; Cheal, 1983; Puur et al., 2011), the amount of public spending on social needs and other. That is, as long as the economy is managed by adults, it is not possible to build a well-thought-out state policy without understanding who adults are and at what age segment of life they are localized.

As for the UK, there is a good policy of social support at different stages of transition to adulthood.

Education: minimum school leaving age, EMA (non-England), FE/HE grants, Widening Participation initiatives, access course funding, free tuition fees.

Employment: young person's minimum wage rate, apprenticeship programmes, Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, Work Programme, Working Tax Credit (n/a for under 25s), Income-related Employment Support Allowance (Personal Independence Payment) for those with disabilities.

Family Formation: Housing benefit, Income support for lone parents, student rate for council tax, Child Tax Credit.

Nowadays all benefit programs are being combined into one Universal Credit payment (Universal Credit is a monthly means-tested benefit for low-income working-age individuals). For example, housing benefit requirements for single under 35s (affecting youth population): if you're single and under 35, you can only get Housing Benefit for bed-sit accommodation or a single room in shared accommodation (Deeming, 2015).

Moreover, the Department for Work and Pensions in the UK provides a programme of intensive support for all 18 to 21 year olds making a new claim to Universal Credit (the Youth Obligation Support Programme). It aims to encourage and support all young people into employment, work-related training or an apprenticeship. A programme of intensive support based on evidence of what works, tailored to your needs and job goals. Throughout this, you receive Universal Credit in line with the agreements. If you are attending training or work experience, you may be reimbursed for travel or childcare costs (Youth Obligation Support Programme, 2019).

We can now link some key themes of discriminations, inequality and transition to adulthood into the implementation of UC. First of all, some technical, material and social issues arose from UC such as up to six-week delayed payments, poor administration and simply cutting the amount of money some people receive (Harwood, 2018). This resulted in a backlash from the third sector e. g. The Trussell trust state that there was a 30% rise in food bank usage after a 6 month roll out of UC compared to the year before. Which shows people being pushed into absolute poverty, struggling for basic needs.

Inequality is found in every age group, but there is a way to overcome it. The fight against ageism should not only focus on the role of the state, but also on the role of society. I believe that an acute problem is the discrimination of workers' rights, depending on age and work experience. Many people lose their jobs because of their age and because of ignorance of new innovative systems or computer programs. Moreover, young students cannot find a job in their specialty, as the market is crowded with professionals with experience. And the employer does not want to train a new employee. Here's where to start.

First, people of all ages need to have time to follow technological innovations for studying and work, be able to use modern gadgets and Internet capabilities not only for business correspondence, but also for maintaining a personal blog or website. To do this, families need children and parents to jointly approach the study of the Internet and share new useful knowledge and information from there.

Second, employers, instead of judging others suitability based on ownership / non-ownership of a particular tool, should be provided with an additional course of professional skills to help them learn new technologies. Perhaps both young and experienced employees will be able to learn something new for themselves and learn from the experience of a senior colleague.

Thirdly, the state should broadcast the idea that society should not try to conform to generalized ideas about youth, maturity and old age. It is necessary to develop an ideological campaign or additional courses at the University to attract others to the discussion, and that people question them stereotypes that determine our behaviour.

Fourth, it is necessary to develop a social institution of control and protection of labour rights. The employer must accept the fact that professional skills do not depend on age. And the older you get, the more you acquire qualities and skills that you can share with others or even try yourself in a new position.

Conclusion

All in all, during the transition from childhood to adulthood there is the highest concentration of significant events that change the social status of the individual and the structure of his life. Today, the transition to adulthood is a process where you need to acquire several events in different spheres of life to acquire the status of an adult. Events in family life, education, work, health, leisure determine the social status of a person who is constantly deals with age inequalities. The state must reduce the pressure of inequality and ageism stereotypes so that society can receive more benefits. However,

strict formal and informal state norms of age limitations seem hard to change because it can lead to more negative outcomes than we have now. At the same time, we should understand that age inequality is based on these state rules and social norms, which affect to discrimination level.

Nevertheless, states should continue to improve their social policies to reduce inequality and give support to those in need. Furthermore, in state policy it is important to focus on key transition points to adulthood. As we defined, a person faces inequality not only because of laws and norms, but also due to the great competition and unequal distribution of wealth in society, and this inequality is more acute in adulthood. The older people get, the more they succumb to social pressure from young people or a younger generation. In this reality, government has to build helpful social institutions of labour control and protection of their rights to reduce the age discrimination of young and old professionals.