Europe Ageing Populations: Myth and reality

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Presentation structure

- Overview of Europe population ageing and projections
  - Population dynamics
  - Migration and population ageing
- Population ageing myth and reality
- Marginalization and old age discrimination
- Quick policy context and conclusion
Population dynamics

- Low fertility rates
  - projected to slightly increase from 1.57 in 2010 to 1.71 in 2060 but remains below replacement levels - 2.1

- New family building patterns
  - Fewer marriages/ more cohabitation; More divorce; Older age at first birth; Higher fertility rate in wealthier states

- Increased life expectancy for both men and women
  - Marked increases in oldest old groups (80 years and above); Almost tripling from 23.7M in 2010 to 62.4M in 2060

- Changes in population composition: Children, working age, older people, older old
Graph 1 - Population pyramids (in thousands), EU27 and EA, in 2010 and 2060

Source: Commission services, Eurostat, EUROPOP2010.
Migration & Population Ageing

- Majority of EU population growth is attributed to migration

- EU is host to at least 20 million non-EU-nationals.
  - Migration is not a ‘new’ phenomenon

- Increased European internal migration

- Migrants provide important contribution to the labour force and in balancing dependency ratio

- Across EU, migrants, especially non-EU women, are key to the long term care workforce

- Older migrants (hidden ageing population)
Ageing population: Myth and reality

- Ageing in itself is not a problem
  - Onset of illness; how can this be delayed
  - Inclusion and civic engagement; active ageing
  - Formal and informal roles (e.g. grandparents, community contribution)

- Opportunities and challenges co-exist

- Perception of ageing
  - Culture variability and assumptions

- Diversity of older people
  - Gender, religion, ethnicity, previous employment etc.
Marginalization and old age discrimination exist

- Old age discrimination in daily life (as consumers for example)

- Loneliness
  - Especially among the very old (the fastest growing group) and those assumed to be ‘cared for by their own’

- Social exclusion
  - Language, social markers, specific groups etc.

- Further marginalized older groups
  - Especially migrants and ethnic and religious minorities older people

- Marginalized workforce serving marginalized groups
  - Societal perception and value
Migrant older people

- Diverse experience; ageing and place

- Migration trajectories, labour participation at younger ages, social capital and other factors influence experience at old age

- Two examples from the UK:
  - Older Turkish migrants (Hussein & Oglak - 65 interviews)
  - Older Norwegian women (Christensen - 8 life course interview)

- Migration choice, journey, empowerment, skills and language capital
  → cumulative effects shape perception of ageing and old age experience
Ageing and policy context

- European, and national, policies and strategies address ageing, racism or poverty separately.
- Need for ageing policy that celebrates and addresses diversity at old age
- Most National Action Plans on social Inclusion do not make any reference to minority ethnic older people
- Perception of migrants as ‘economic utility’ rarely as ‘human beings’
  - Effect on ‘older’ migrants
Conclusion

- EU as the rest of the world is faced with population ageing
- Migrants are key to population growth and in addressing high dependency ratio
- Earlier waves of migrants to Europe shape current ageing population structure
- Need for policy that incorporates issues of migration and ageing collectively not separately
  - Realizing diversity of older people and different marginalization factors: ageism, discrimination, religious belief, social markers etc.
Thank you

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