

Ageism

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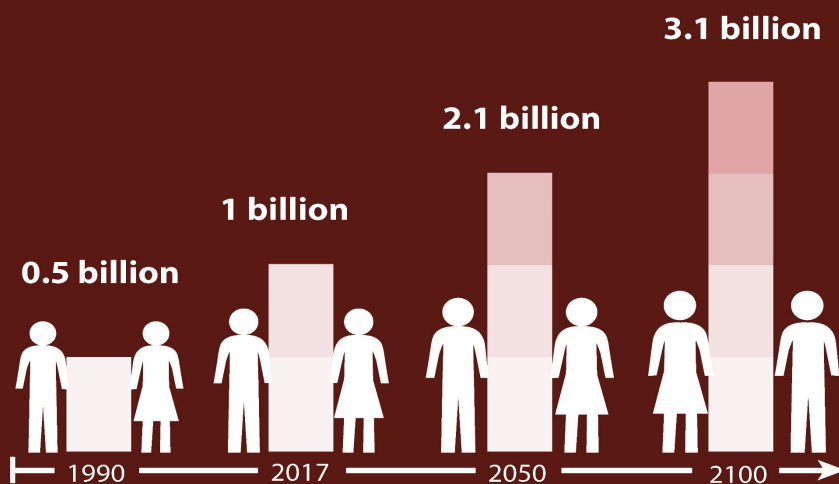
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Ageing Population

Projected global population aged 60 years or over




Source: United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs,
Population Division, *World Population Prospects: The 2017 Revision*
Produced by: United Nations Department of Public Information

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

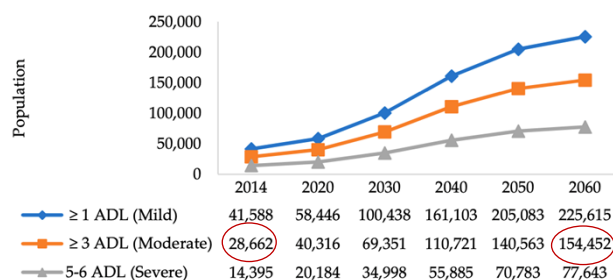
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Article

40-Year Projections of Disability and Social Isolation of Older Adults for Long-Range Policy Planning in Singapore

Reuben Ng ^{1,2,*}, Si Qi Lim ¹ , Su Ying Saw ³ and Kelvin Bryan Tan ³

In Singapore, Disability is projected to increase 5 times in 40 years

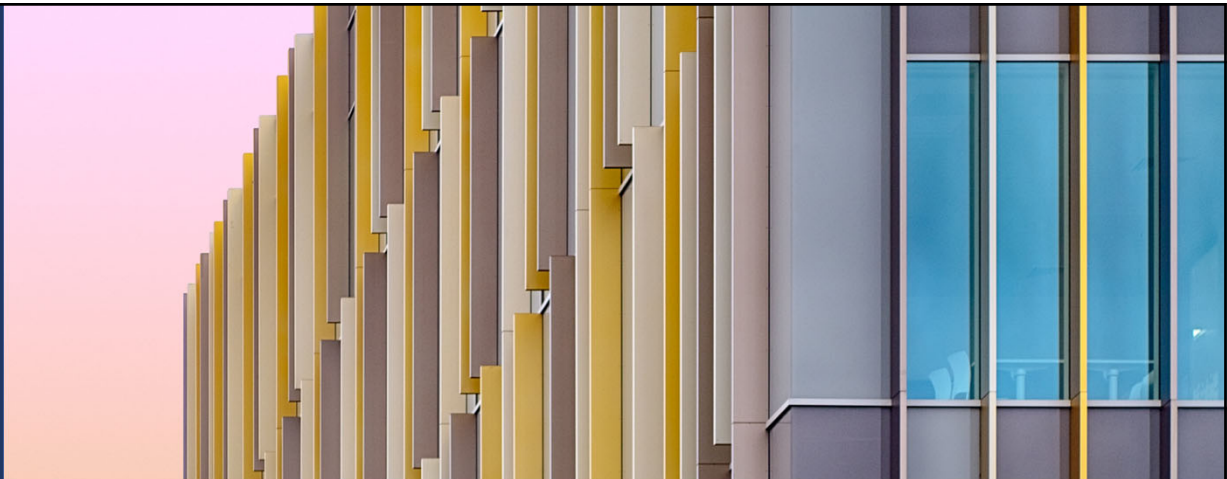


Ng, R., Lim, S. Q., Saw, S. Y., & Tan, K. B. (2020). 40-Year Projections of Disability and Social Isolation of Older Adults for Long-Range Policy Planning in Singapore. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 17(14), 4950. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph17144950>

Agenda

1. What is ageism?
 - Visual depictions
2. Ageism in the media.
3. Why does ageism matter?
4. Combating Ageism and Reframing Aging

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What is Ageism and Visual Depictions

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The term 'ageism' was coined in 1969 by Robert Butler, a Pulitzer Prize-winning gerontologist who later founded the US National Institute on Aging

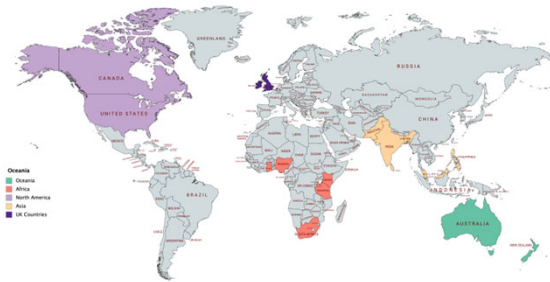
- Butler (1969) defined ageism as "**a process of systematic stereotyping and discrimination against people because they are old**", likening it to two other forms of discrimination: sexism and racism.
- He used the term to describe how society devalues and marginalizes older adults simply based on age.



Ageism in the Media

Our psychomics platform contains the largest known international news media corpus

- 15-billion-word online database with over 40 million articles taken from 20 countries since 2010
- 40-70 million new words added weekly.
- Biggest cross-cultural corpus globally



Asia

India
Singapore
Malaysia
Bangladesh
Hong Kong
Sri Lanka
Philippines
Pakistan

North America

U.S.
Canada

Oceania

Australia
New Zealand

Others

U.K. (Europe)
Ireland (Europe)
Jamaica (Caribbean)

Africa

Kenya
Tanzania
Ghana
Nigeria
South Africa

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In News Media, there are 6 times more negative descriptions of old adults compared to positive ones

Table 2. Top 10 Descriptors of Elders in the UK and US in a 1.1-billion-word corpus of popular media.

Top Descriptors of Elders in the UK ¹	Top Descriptors of Elders in the US ²
Frail	Hoarders
Infirm	Community-dwelling
Housebound	Infirm
Dementing	Homebound
Long-stay	Frail
Disabled	Disabled
Spinster	Functional
Ageing	Indigent
Childless	Impaired
Vulnerable	Handicapped

Notes: ¹ Top collocates of “elderly” in the British National Corpus ranked by mutual information score. ² Top collocates of “elderly” in the Corpus of Contemporary American Corpus ranked by mutual information score.

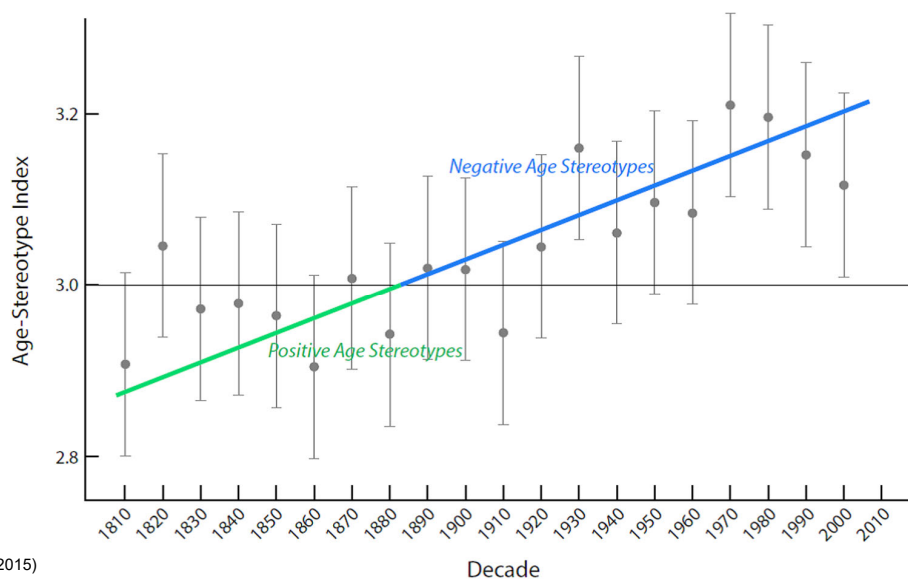
(Ng, 2021)

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How are older adults stereotyped over 200 years in the US?

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In 1880, age stereotypes switched from being positive to negative.



(Ng et al., 2015)

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Descriptors of an “elderly” person at four time points over 200 years

Examples of age stereotypes as shown through collocates of “elderly” over four time points from 1810-2009

Noun/decade	Elderly/1820-9	Elderly/1920-9	Elderly/1970-9	Elderly/2000-9
Top collocates	decent-looking inhabitable sedate favorably healthy	gentlemen stout widow concert-going middle-aged	gentlemen disabled handicapped poor blind	patient infirm frail disabled gentlemen
Sample sentences	...been attended by two <i>decent-looking elderly</i> people, a man and...	...conversation with a very <i>stout</i> , florid-faced, <i>elderly</i> gentleman, with fiery red hair...	...Supplementary Security Income program for the <i>elderly</i> poor and <i>disabled</i>rushed to emergency rooms. Scores of <i>elderly</i> and <i>infirm</i> people, many of whom...
	...and he was somewhat <i>elderly</i> , although still <i>healthy</i> , strong....	...down-at-the-heel vaudevillians, <i>elderly</i> , <i>concert-going</i> ladies from the boarding house	...special treatment for the <i>elderly</i> , <i>blind</i> and bedridden...	...scholar appeared to be a somewhat <i>frail elderly</i> human, wearing a tweedy suit...

Ng et al (2015)

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Factors Associated With Declining Trend of Aging Narratives Across 210 Years

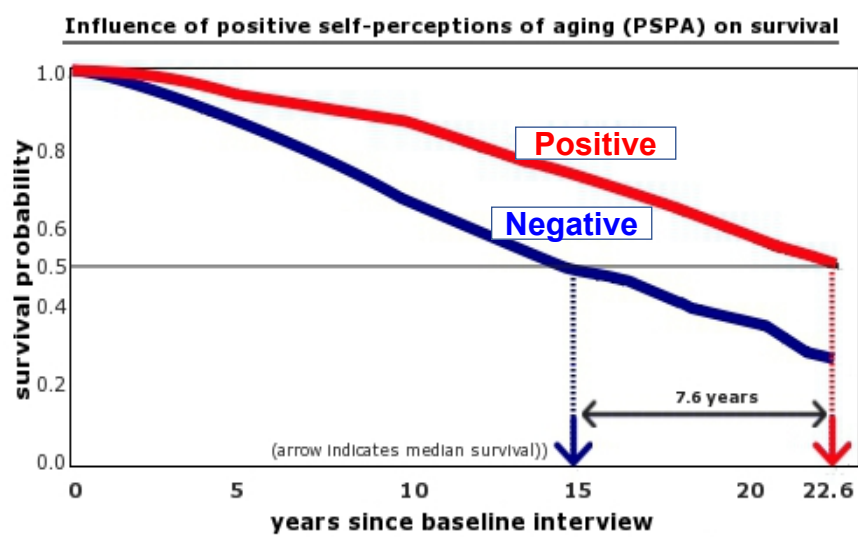
- Medicalization of aging,
 - Increasing use of medical and physical health descriptors, $\beta = -1.26$, $p = .013$
- High status descriptors of older adults have decreased
 - Indicating the diminishing status of older adults, $\beta = 0.68$, $p = .003$.
- Warm ($\beta = 0.37$, $p = .043$) and competent ($\beta = 0.44$, $p = .047$) descriptors have decreased significantly.

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Why does ageism matter?

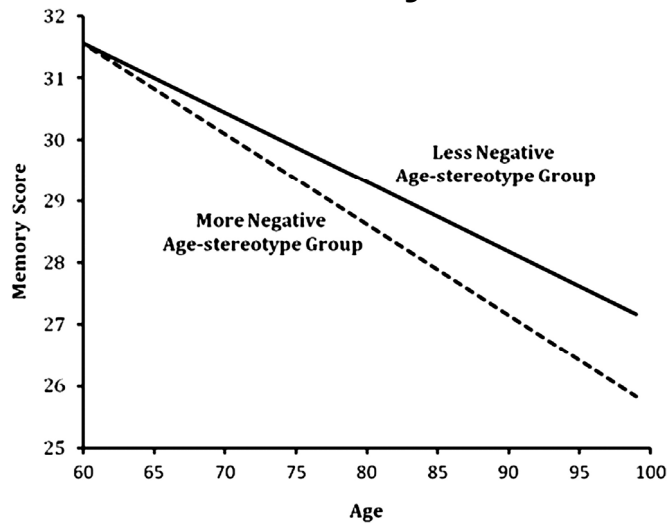
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Longevity



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Memory



Levy B R et al. J Gerontol B Psychol Sci Soc Sci 2011;geronb.gbr120

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Health costs of ageism calculated at \$63 billion annually, study finds

Ageism — prejudice directed at older persons — adversely affects health because it can create stress, which is shown to impact many types of health outcomes.

By Michael Greenwood | NOVEMBER 13, 2018

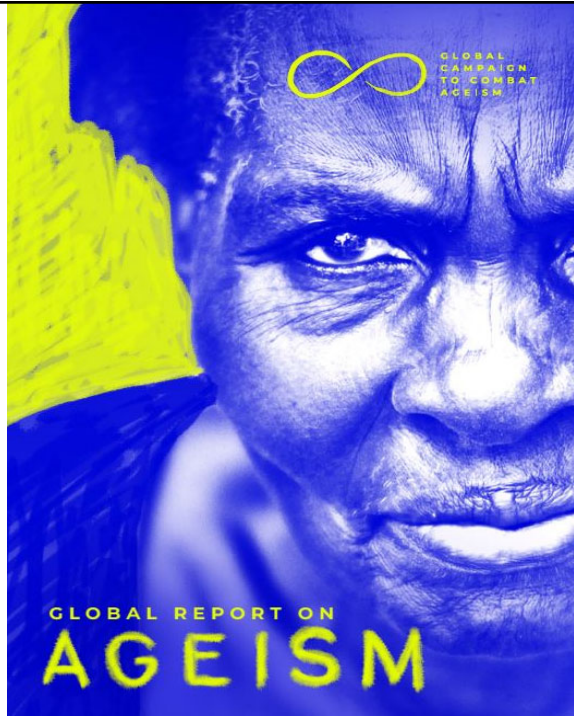




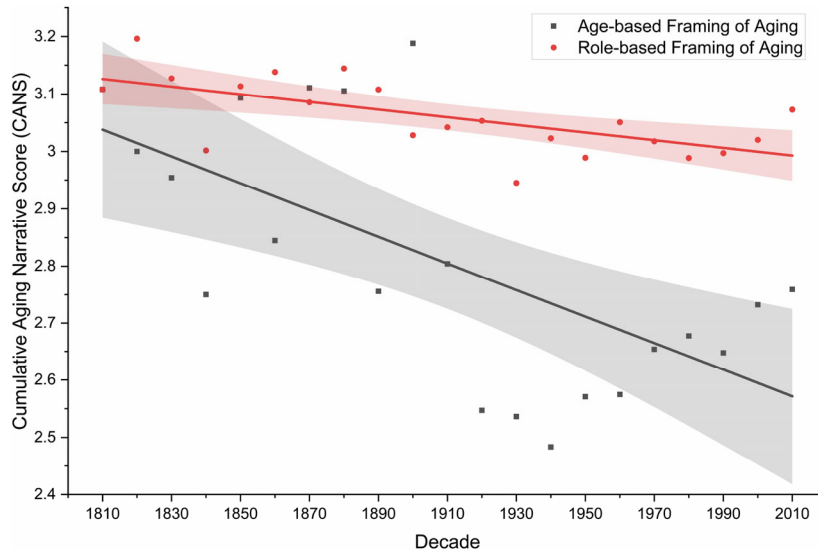
What next? Combating Ageism and Reframing Aging

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In 2016, 194 member states called on the **World Health Organization (WHO)** to lead a global campaign against ageism.

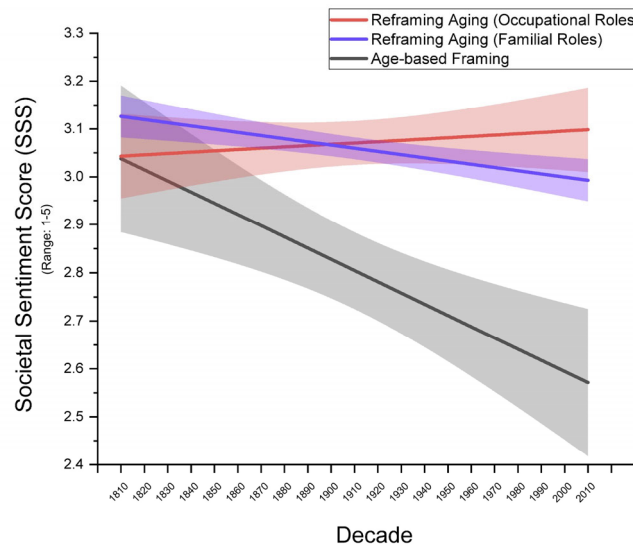


Over the last 210 years, framing older adults by their family roles has evoked more positive stereotypes than framing them by their age



Ng, R. & Indran, N. (2021). Role-Based Framing of Older Adults Linked to Decreased Ageism Over 210 Years: Evidence From a 600-Million-Word Historical Corpus. *The Gerontologist*, 62, 4, 589–597 <https://doi.org/10.1093/geront/gnab108>

Occupational role-based framing is linked to the most positive portrayals of older adults, followed by family role-based framing and age-based framing.

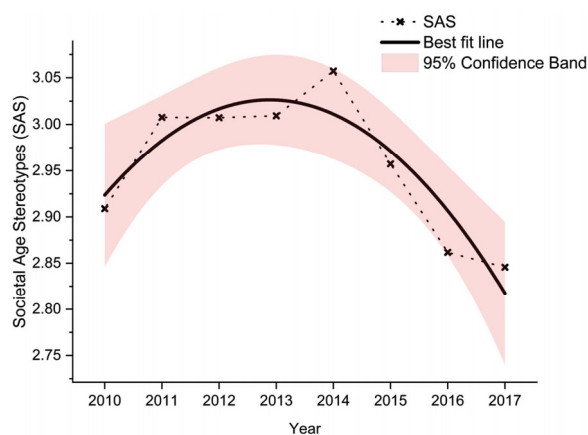


Ng, R. & Indran, N. (2023). Reframing Aging: Foregrounding Familial and Occupational Roles of Older Adults is Linked to Decreased Ageism over Two Centuries. *Journal of Aging and Social Policy*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08959420.2023.2238538>

The Impact of Aging Policy on Ageism: 8-year Longitudinal Study of a 10- billion-word News Media Corpus

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Singapore's Pioneer Generation Policy: Well-intentioned policies to improve the quality of life of older adults may unintentionally worsen ageism



Ng, R., Chow, T. Y. J., & Yang, W. (2021). The Impact of Aging Policy on Societal Age Stereotypes and Ageism. *The Gerontologist*, 62, 4, 598–606.
<https://doi.org/10.1093/geront/gnab151>

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Words Matter

Reframe ageing from burden to blessing

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Thank you!

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