



European Multiplier Seminar
Labour Office & Clients



Older people

Martin Persson

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- ◆ It is an association of five foundations:
the extra-mural departments attached to the Universities of Stockholm, Uppsala, Göteborg, Lund and Umeå.



Folkuniversitetet has five regional offices with forty local branches all over Sweden

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FOLKUNIVERSITETET

- ◆ Our annual turnover is approximately 100 million Euro.
- ◆ We employ around 400 teachers on a full-time basis and a further 7,000 part-time.
- ◆ An administrative staff of some 500 people works with administration and development.





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Older people

- ◆ 55+ years old
- ◆ Same as OECD for example.

Conceptions of Age

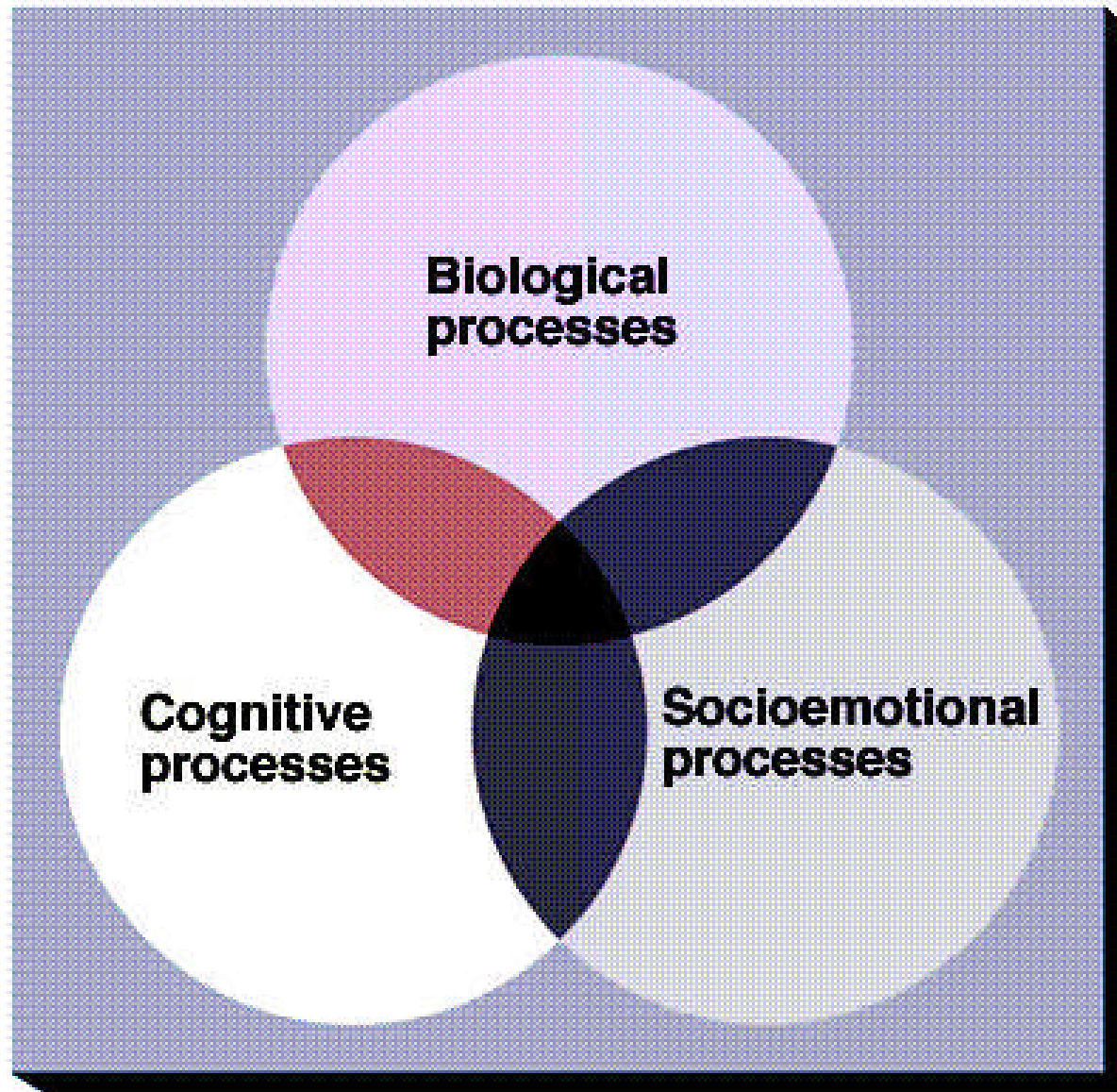
Chronological age

Biological age

Psychological age

Social age

Biological, Cognitive, and Socioemotional Processes in Development



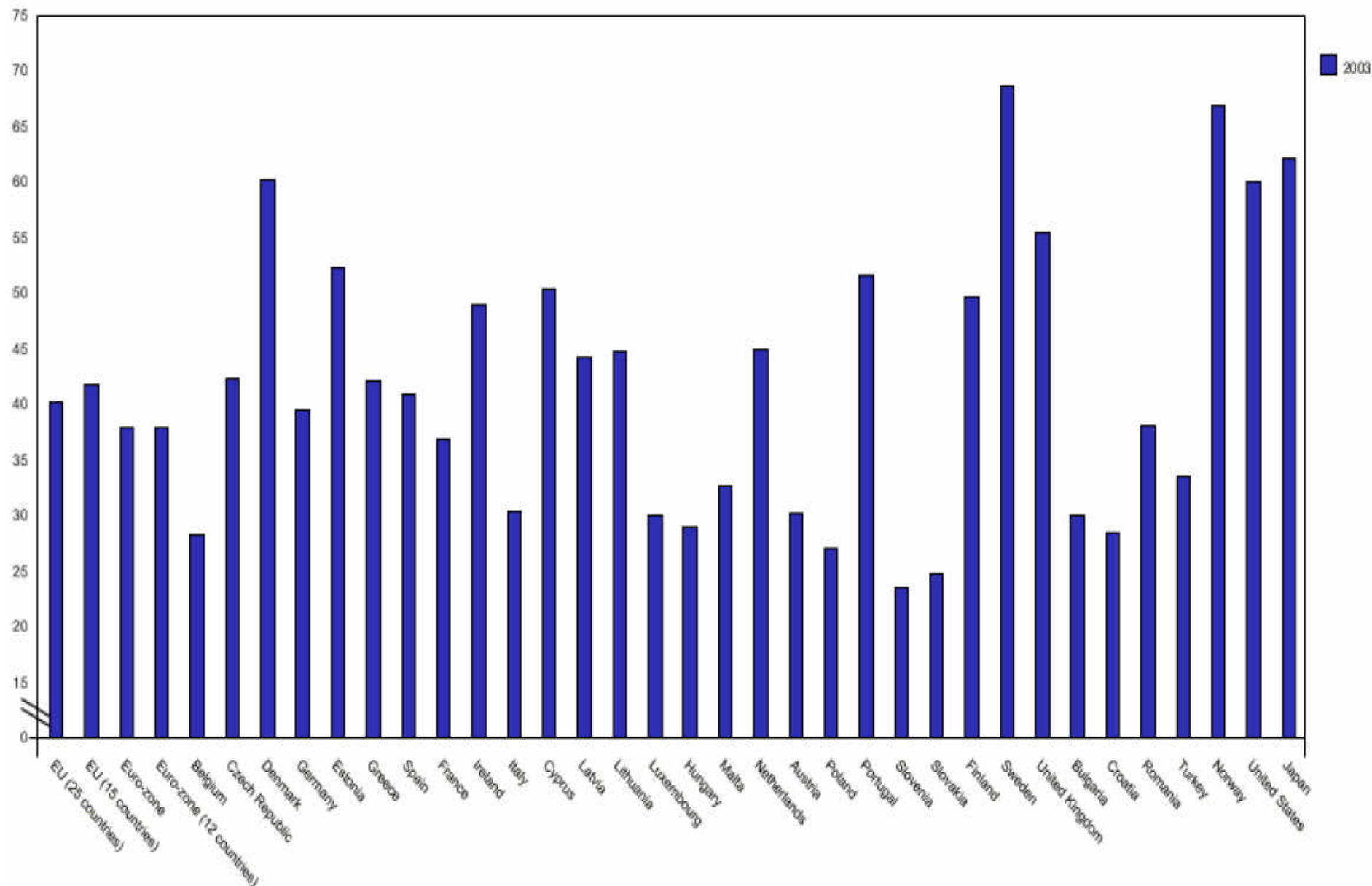


Older people and the labour market

- ◆ Hiring and retention rates of workers decline significantly after the age of 50 in all OECD countries.
- ◆ The target of European Employment Strategy is that the employment rate for older workers (aged 55–64) should be 50% of the population by 2010

Total employment rate of older workers

%





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Sub-groups

- ◆ Immigrant
- ◆ Disabilities/long term sick leave
- ◆ Social disadvantaged group
- ◆ Gender is also a factor that influence

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Factors that affect employment

- ◆ Employment barriers
- ◆ Weak employability

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Employer barriers

1. There is evidence of age discrimination in all countries reflecting both negative and positive stereotypical views by employers about older workers.
2. The employment of older workers may be discouraged because rigid seniority compensation structures cause labour costs to rise faster with age than productivity.



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Employer barriers

3. Employers and trade unions have sometimes collaborated to convert state subsidised early retirement schemes into a socially acceptable way of laying-off workers.
4. Mandatory-retirement rules are common in some countries.



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Weak employability

1. Employment prospects for some groups of older people are poor because they have obsolete skills, are not receiving appropriate help in finding jobs if unemployed
2. Older workers receive far less training than younger workers in all (OECD) countries.



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Weak employability

3. A strong policy focus on tackling youth unemployment has meant that older unemployed workers are also under-represented in active labour market programmes in most countries.
4. Poor or inappropriate working conditions can also push some older workers into early retirement.



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How to overcome

- ◆ Improving financial incentives.
- ◆ Changing employer attitudes and practices
- ◆ Improving employability



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Changing employer attitudes and practices.

- ◆ Age-discrimination legislation is important but is more effective if it is complemented by information campaigns and guidelines for promoting best practice and the benefits of age diversity in the workplace.



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Improving employability

- ◆ As working lives are progressively extended, training becomes more critical for strengthening the employability of older worker, but should also look more profitable to both employers and employees
- ◆ So far, retraining older workers ranks low among policy priorities of public and private employment services.



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Improving employability

- ◆ Since the number of older jobseekers is likely to increase, this age group will have an increasing need for employment assistance through career counselling, job-search assistance and help with self-employment.



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The other perspective

- ◆ How does the “older” unemployed individual perceive their situation?



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The other perspective

- ◆ There is evidence that unemployed individuals experience stigmatization that could stem from the fact that not obtaining employment is perceived as an individual short coming.
- ◆ Unemployed have a greater risk of experiencing negative impact in their psychological well-being, life satisfaction and even physical health



The other perspective

- ◆ A gender perspective also adds an additional stress for males, especially if they are from an older generation, since they have the inclination that they should be the ones that support the family.
- ◆ Not being able to live up to that expectation influence their self-concept negatively and consequently they feel ashamed



The other perspective

- ◆ The older worker is the least flexible or most negative to relocating in order to achieve employment
- ◆ Commuting (being away 12 hour per day)
- ◆ Taking a less paid job instead of being unemployed or changing type of occupation



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The other perspective

Factors that influence

- ◆ Education
- ◆ Married or single (gender factor, cultural)



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What have been done before?

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- ◆ School education continues to produce people inadequately equipped and unprepared for lifelong learning, adult education tends to replicate the school system and therefore fails to attract low-skilled individuals.



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- ◆ Barriers to (lifelong) learning are related to motivation to learn, aptitude to learn and assessment of the possible benefits of learning or training offers that do not match the interests and capacities of people.



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- ◆ Investigations have shown that long-term unemployed people do not fully benefit from participating in traditional training



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- ◆ Older adults often prefer a non-traditional learning environment.



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Understand the client

This is a key concept, if you do not understand the clients, how can you guide or teach them?



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Phenomenological

- ◆ People's perceptions or subjective realities are considered to be valid data for investigation
- ◆ Phenomenological discrepancy = two people perceiving same situation differently



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Lev Vygotsky (1896-1934)

- ◆ **Claimed that person's cognitive skills can be understood only when they are:**
- ◆ Analyzed & interpreted
- ◆ Are mediated by words, language & forms of discourse
- ◆ Have their origins in social relations



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Sense of coherence

- ◆ Comprehensibility—the cognitive component
- ◆ Manageability—the instrumental or behavioural component
- ◆ Meaningfulness—the motivational component



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