



From double to triple standards of ageing. Perceptions of physical appearance at the intersections of age, gender and class

Erica Åberg^{a,*}, Iida Kukkonen^a, Outi Sarpila^b

^a Unit of Economic Sociology, Department of Social Research, Faculty of Social Sciences, Assistentinkatu 7, FI-20014, University of Turku, Finland

^b INVEST research flagship, Unit of Sociology, Department of Social Research, Faculty of Social Sciences, Assistentinkatu 7, FI-20014, University of Turku, Finland



ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:

Physical appearance
Double standards of ageing
Triple standards of ageing
Social class
Gender

ABSTRACT

Since the 1970s, when Susan Sontag coined the term, discussions on the double standard of ageing has continued to evolve. Recently, scholars of feminist gerontology have called for an intersectional approach to address cultural norms of physical appearance and ageing. In this paper, we aim to investigate whether men and women internalise ageist norms differently; that is, double standards of ageing exist. Second, we explore whether self-identified social class affects the internalisation of these norms. To the best of our knowledge, the present study is the first to examine the double and triple standards of ageing with nationally representative data ($N = 1600$).

Drawing from Bourdieusian capital theory, sociology of the body, consumer culture, and feminist gerontology, we suggest that the double standard of ageing exists for women who feel that ageing erodes their appearance, give more importance to their appearance than men, and fear looking old from an early age. Further, a 'triple standard' is also traced. Our results indicate that ageing working-class women are less confident about their appearances than upper-class women. Thus, upper-middle-class women seem less vulnerable to the negative aspects of ageing than women who have less social, cultural, and economic capital to enhance their ageing appearance. The triple standard extends to men as well: appearance is evaluated as equally important by upper-middle-class middle-aged men as by women of similar age and social background. Alternatively, our results could be interpreted as upper-middle-class people experiencing more restrictive norms regarding ageing; that is, such people are compelled to seek anti-ageing solutions and are not allowed to surrender to the natural ageing process.

Introduction: physical appearance in an ageing consumer culture

The standards of attractiveness in contemporary consumerist culture are defined by youthful attributes and are continuously reinforced through media (e.g. Hurd Clarke & Griffin, 2008; Öberg & Tornstam, 1999). Notwithstanding these standards, ageing is inevitable and physical appearance-related assets typically diminish in value over the years. The well-known notion of a 'double standard of ageing' suggests that an ageing woman is judged more harshly than an ageing man. Accordingly, the loss of 'good' (aka 'youthful') looks associated with ageing is more detrimental to women than to men (Sontag, 1972). Influential feminist scholars, such as Bordo (1993) and Wolf (1991), stated that as women are socialised to be more concerned with their appearances than men and thus the fading of youthful looks is more damaging to their self-images.

The emphasis on beauty and youthfulness is a part of a broader rise in the importance of aesthetic values in society (Holla & Kuipers, 2015).

Physical appearance is increasingly conceptualised as a form of 'capital' in sociological parlance, complementing Bourdieu's theory by highlighting the role of the body (Anderson, Grunert, Katz, & Lovascio, 2010; Mears, 2015). The so-called 'aesthetic capital' can be understood as a combination of different resources or assets related to physical appearance, including facial beauty, body shape, size, and physique as well as styles of grooming and clothing (Anderson et al., 2010).

Recent considerations suggest that norms regarding ageing not only differ based on gender, but other intersections matter as well (e.g. Calasanti & Slevin, 2013; (Calasanti and King, 2015) Kuipers, 2015). For example, social classes offer disparate possibilities to accumulate aesthetic capital. However, having aesthetic capital can also be about taste, and indeed, appearance-related practices and appreciations intertwine with cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1984; cf. Kuipers, 2015). While the population is globally getting older, in modern consumer culture the emphasis is on ageless physical appearance, defining 'successful ageing' as ageing without giving an impression of doing so (Twigg, 2013). The

* Corresponding author.

E-mail addresses: erica.m.berg@utu.fi (E. Åberg), iltkuk@utu.fi (I. Kukkonen), oukasa@utu.fi (O. Sarpila).

complexity of the subject cannot be captured by concentrating solely on the gendered double standards because social class differences must also be considered. Approaching ageing as a gendered and a class-based phenomenon is important as individuals face the challenges of obtaining so-called successful ageing with their economic, social, and cultural resources.

We analysed data from a national survey conducted in Finland in the spring of 2016. Finland offers an intriguing context to study physical appearance, gender, and ageing. Like other Nordic welfare states, Finland ranks high in gender equality indices (e.g. the *World Economic Forum*, 2020). Nordic welfare states have been lauded for their women-friendly welfare policies (see *Borchorst & Siim*, 2002; *Lister*, 2009). Indeed, Finland has comparatively high levels of gender equality in terms of, for example, educational attainment, political empowerment, and health (*Hausmann, Tyson, & Zahidi*, 2012), as well as matters concerning paid work, money, decision-making, power, and time (*Plantenga, Remery, Figueiredo, & Smith*, 2009). Moreover, research suggests that youthfulness and attractiveness are considered less important traits for Finnish women than they are, for example, in the United States (*Uotinen*, 1998).

Gendered and class-based double standards in the Global North have not been systematically addressed in previous research. In this study, we combine discussions from Bourdieusian capital theory, sociology of the body, consumer culture, and feminist gerontology to build a comprehensive understanding of the norms regarding ageing. As previous research has mainly focused on either ageing women or ageing men by using a qualitative approach (for an exception, see *Twigg & Majima*, 2014), our study offers essential insights into how the intersections of age, gender, and class intertwine at the population level, contributing to double (and even triple) standards of ageing in the Global North. Our aim is to examine whether men and women internalise the ageist norms of consumer society differently. Additionally, we explore how self-identified social class mediates the individual experience, and if the double standard of ageing has been substituted by 'triple standards of ageing': gendered and class-based social pressures regarding ageing. We asked whether men and women of different social classes evaluate their attractiveness as being higher or lower compared to other people of the same age and gender, the value they place on physical appearance, and how worried they are about age-related changes in their appearance.

The double standard of ageing: physical appearance-related norms and self-perceptions

Norms regarding physical appearance are primarily gendered, as women and men face different expectations when it comes to physical appearance (i.e. attractiveness). The normative differences are referred to in the literature as double standards (cf. *Bordini & Sperb*, 2013; *Kukkonen, Åberg, Sarpila, & Pajunen*, 2018; *Rijken & Liefbroer*, 2016; *Rijken & Merz*, 2014). In this study, we use *Foschi's* (2000) conceptualisation that identical behaviour of men and women is evaluated and morality is assigned to those evaluations based on gender. The double standard of ageing (*Sontag*, 1972) refers to both genders being devalued as they reach older ages; however, women face greater losses because age erodes their most highly valued social asset (their physical attractiveness) while enhancing men's most valued social resources (their earning potential and achievement in the public sphere) (*Barrett & von Rohr*, 2008, p. 360). The double standard of ageing insists that appearance standards are higher and narrower for women than for men. For women, beauty is more strictly equated with youth, whereas men have more options. Ageing is associated with loss of visual and sexual allure in women, but a man at a more advanced age may be considered handsome and sexy (*Sontag*, 1972). Ageing and the perceived loss of attractiveness in light of the existing beauty ideal also constitute a threat to an older woman's sense of social currency, self-esteem, and identity (*Hurd Clarke*, 2002).

Several studies confirm the double standards of ageing. *Deusch, Zalenski, and Clark* (1986) found that although ratings of both men and women's attractiveness became lower as the age of the rated subject increased, the decline was greater for women. Women are regarded more negatively for showing physical signs of ageing than men (*Harris*, 1994), and women are deemed to be older at an earlier age than men (*Barrett & von Rohr*, 2008; *Itzin & Phillipson*, 1993). *Itzin and Phillipson* (1995) reported that women experience 'never being the right age', and to overcome age-related gendered disadvantages they try to look as young as possible. *Berman, O'Nan, and Floyd* (1981) suggest that people do not necessarily internalise double standards of ageing, but they may uphold them publicly to conform to presumed social standards. Participants do not exhibit double standards when privately judging older people's appearances, but when making evaluations in groups, the responses of male respondents were harsher for women. In contrast to the findings that the looks of ageing women are evaluated more harshly, *Kotter-Grühn and Hess* (2012) found that older female raters were the only cohort to deem older women more attractive than older men. The study also highlighted the connections between attractiveness and age: targets who were rated fitter or more attractive were also perceived as younger.

Furthermore, there appears to be a gendered double standard when it comes to using age concealment techniques. *Harris* (1994) found that while women were generally expected to use age concealment techniques (and thus were more likely to do so), such practices were generally denounced by both genders. Men who attempted to conceal greying hair and wrinkles were evaluated harshly (*Harris*, 1994). Likewise, in the Finnish context, (*Sarpila, Koivula, Kukkonen, Åberg, & Pajunen*, 2020) found a double standard in how men and women are expected to engage in beauty practices to combat the signs of ageing: men who put in efforts to conceal or counter the visual signs of ageing are judged significantly more harshly than women who engage in such practices.

Thus, it appears that ageist appearance-related norms are indeed gendered. However, the double standards of ageing are not necessarily individually endorsed: norms do not automatically translate into perceptions of oneself. Indeed, studies comparing the self-perceptions of ageing men and women do not reveal a clear pattern. In studying self-perceptions, *Wilcox* (1997) did not find evidence to support the double standard hypothesis. However, *Öberg and Tornstam* (1999) found that men were more content with their bodies regardless of age. In their review article, *Hurd Clarke and Korotchenko* (2011) found that men are less concerned about their ageing appearances or age-related changes in their bodies. Moreover, women's satisfaction with their bodies actually increased with age (*Öberg & Tornstam*, 1999). *Franzoi and Koehler* (1998) found that gender differences in body attitudes diminished with age. *Krekula* (2016) suggested that the double standard of the ageing hypothesis is wrong in assuming that older women always hold themselves to youthful appearance standards; instead, older women can relate to both youthful and age-related beauty norms.

According to *Hurd Clarke* (2002), older women's experiences of their ageing bodies are shaped by ageist norms and double standards of ageing regardless of marital, health, and economic status. Most women in that study indirectly equated youthfulness and thinness with attractiveness as they stated that they were most attractive in their youth. The perception of one's physical attractiveness remains central to a woman's sense of identity, even though the definition of attractiveness can be questioned by creating alternative meanings to preserve social currency in later life (*Hurd Clarke*, 2002). Indeed, there is a certain discourse in women's magazines as well as in academia (cf. *Krekula*, 2007), based on the idea that as women age, they mature to the point where their well-being is no longer tied to their appearance. 'Inner beauty' becomes more important than superficial appearance, and women invest in other parts of the self (cf. *Gosselink, Cox, & McClure*, S. J. & De Jong, M. L., 2008). Simply put, there is a change in priorities whereby appearance matters less to women as they age (*Hurd*, 2000; *Tiggemann*, 2004).

Nevertheless, as Hurd Clarke and Griffin (2008) discuss, women respond to ageist social pressure by investing in beauty interventions, such as hair dye, makeup, and surgical or non-surgical cosmetic procedures to counter the physical signs of ageing. They suggest that social position, employment, and partner status influence but do not determine one's experiences of beauty work, ageism, and ageing. The motivation for study participants to engage in beauty work was to avoid social and physical invisibility and employment related-ageism, to enhance self-esteem, and importantly, the desire to attract or retain a romantic partner (Hurd Clarke & Griffin, 2008). According to Calasanti and King (2018), ageing men work on their bodies and aspire to maintain their sexual performance, whereas women try to maintain or enhance sexual attractiveness to men.

A study of South Korean elderly women (Elfving-Hwang, 2016) challenged dominant discourses in the West that present surgical and non-surgical beauty practices on the ageing female body as primarily self-indulgent or driven by anxiety over inability to meet existing youthful beauty ideals. For those women, engaging in beauty regimes was not only a way to present a positive appearance that signifies control over the ageing body, but also a way to continue enjoying the body. Women's engagement with beauty practices also emerged as an embodied practice of maintaining positive self-esteem and showing respect to others.

In sum, previous research suggests that the appearances of ageing women are evaluated harsher than those of men, and ageing women are expected to do more work to maintain their looks than men. However, these societal norms do not automatically lead women to devalue their looks. Moreover, while women engage in beauty work, it is not necessarily driven by a need to adhere to societal norms. Nevertheless, most of the literature reviewed suggests that women are more concerned about the effects of ageing on their physical appearance than men, and tend to evaluate their ageing appearances more negatively than men.

Triple standards of ageing: Ageing as a question of gender and class

Previous literature on experiences of ageing has predominantly focused on women and their perceptions of age-related changes in physical appearance. Some argue that the associations between physical appearance and gender are linked to social class. According to scholars of feminist gerontology (e.g. Calasanti & Slevin, 2001, Calasanti and King, 2015), ageing is a subject that requires a more nuanced, intersectional approach. Men and women experience ageing in relation to different social categories, such as sexual orientation, ethnicity, and social class.

While ageing involves changes—and bodily decline—these are mediated by social class in important ways. In ageing, class differences become inscribed into bodies, and social classes develop distinct dispositions towards the body. Featherstone claimed that the upper classes, safe in their social positions and at ease in their skins, are equipped with dispositions that allow a distancing from 'the repulsive properties of old age' ((Featherstone, 1985), p. 128). Accordingly, working-class people are more accepting of different body shapes and the bodily decline that comes with ageing. The body is seen as an instrument, not as an end-in-itself. Its functioning is more important than its form. According to Featherstone, it is particularly the middle classes who are anxious about ageing and seek to maintain their youthful appearances. His reasoning echoes Bourdieu's (1984, p. 200–220) claim that working-class women were less aware of the market value of beauty, and thus less likely to invest in it. Therefore, despite being uneasy with their bodies, they would not feel the need to develop it. Bourgeois women, on the other hand, recognise the value of beauty and of investing in it and have greater means to achieve it. Thus, they have disproportionate resources, and responsibility, to enhance their appearance (Bourdieu, 1984). However, this might also indicate that middle-class women are equally aware of appearance's market value,

but do not necessarily have the capital to access it.

For Bourdieu, physical appearance is integrated as a part of one's cultural capital (see also Kuipers, 2015). In this approach, aesthetic judgment is associated with an overarching 'habitus' encompassing a range of tastes from cultural artefacts, such as music and arts, to, presumably, physical appearance. Habitus is specific to social background, particularly social class. Prieur and Savage (2013) traced the rising importance of 'emerging cultural capital' in various European countries. In contrast to the Bourdieusian understanding of upper-class cultural forms, emerging cultural capital is inclusive and international, including sports, popular culture, and information technology. In an empirical study of the British class structure, Savage et al. (2013) found that this type of capital is prominent among the new class of 'emergent service workers' and the established middle class which combines old and new forms of cultural capital. Interestingly, one lifestyle practice included in emerging cultural capital is fitness, indicating that new middle classes distinguish themselves through bodily aesthetics. Emerging cultural capital alludes to the fragmentation of traditional sociological class divisions into more nuanced forms, defined most notably by age.

Following Bourdieu, Dumas, Laberge and Straka (2005) found that social positions and conditions of existence (lifestyle, living conditions) shape habitus in relation to bodily appearance, which leads to marked social class responses to ageing. Accordingly, working-class women were generally satisfied with their appearances and did not place value on beauty and cosmetic care due to, for example, economic hardships in life. In contrast, women with more economic and cultural capital alongside temporal freedom were engaged in various beauty and fitness enhancement practices. For them, the ageing process and the concomitant changes in bodily appearance were experienced as more downgrading, whereas women of working-class background were more accepting of bodily changes in later life. Despite confirming the process of differentiation between social classes, this study also established certain commonalities in older women's relation to their bodily appearances. Coming to terms with ageing appearances that diverge from the youthful norms of beauty was explained by coining the term *age habitus*: a set of shared dispositions by people of a certain age that influences attitudes towards bodily appearance more strongly than class in later life. McMullin and Cairney (2004) construe self-esteem as a relevant factor for examining the structural power relations embedded in ageing, gender, and class. They suggest, first, that perceptions of physical attractiveness are more likely to affect self-esteem for women than that for men. Second, women from disadvantaged social class backgrounds consider their bodies deteriorating in relation to class-based ideals and socially constructed norms of beauty and youth. Their self-esteem was threatened by the fact that they perceived themselves as 'looking old'. Women with more advantaged backgrounds were more likely to enjoy the experience of ageing, liberated by their experiences of men not focussing on their looks, and enjoying the self-confidence and power gained over the years.

In addition to cultural capital and class habitus, occupational status and working life conditions also shape the experience of ageing. Granleese and Sayer (2006) report a 'triple jeopardy' of experiencing sexism, ageism, and lookism for female academics. The study establishes that highly educated women are judged on their gender, age, looks, and demeanor differently than men to fit the male-dominated environment of academia. According to Kuipers (2015), new middle classes value urbanity and involvement in global culture and are increasingly attuned to the demands of the post-industrial service economy, employed at service jobs and requiring 'aesthetic labor', where attractive self-presentation is part of the job qualifications (Witz, Warhurst & Nickson, 2003). The expansion of the service sector has also generated a wide range of middle-class occupations—particularly, members of the so-called creative class—that emphasise the importance of physical appearance and self-presentation (Sarpila, 2013; Smith Maguire, 2008). In middle-class occupations, requirements for physical

appearance are also present: good looks may also appear as a marketable skill and an asset within these occupations. The aesthetic requirements do not necessarily come to matter less while ageing; they might even become accentuated in the working life context.

The aesthetic claims of ageing men can be tied to occupational requirements, and as such, be part of their embodied aesthetic capital in working life in a socio-cultural context that equates physical attractiveness with young, slim, and toned appearance. Calasanti and King (2018) found that middle-aged privileged professional men were confronting a possible status decline due to ageing. In their study, the men refused this subordination by focusing on their body to maintain masculinity and strength associated with young masculine bodies so that they could avoid the growing invisibility that awaits them when reaching old age. Additionally, in a study of the male-dominant sector of traders, ageing bodies were presented as requiring constant maintenance to encompass the cultural expectations for a viable, sustainable, and durable body in a workplace (Riach & Cutcher, 2014). As these examples indicate, studies regarding men's physical appearance and ageing seem to have mainly focused on upper- or middle-class masculinities in the middle ages (for an exception, see Ojala, Calasanti, King, & Pietilä, 2016).

Regardless of occupational status, men might suffer less from the cultural perceptions regarding ageing. For men, early signs of ageing, such as grey hair, are read as marks of social dominance, maturity, and authority in working life. However, the construction of masculinity emphasises competitiveness and public invulnerability, which makes the individual experience of decline and loss more problematic (Twigg, 2004). These supposedly masculine ideals emphasise working life as a source of identity and are likely harder to attain when retiring, when there are less possibilities for risk-taking and competition. Thompson Jr and Langendoerfer (2016) re-examined the existing narrative and interview-based research by exploring the masculinities voiced by older men. According to their study, men typically live by 'the mandates to acquire and retain other's respect, to project an aura of toughness and independence, and to be courageous risk-takers when necessary' (Thompson Jr & Langendoerfer, 2016, p. 136). While not experiencing fewer concerns about their physical appearance per se, the mismatch between their ageing and expectations of ageless masculinity can cause experiences of personal troubles and emotional strain. How to live up to these expectations is also a question of other intersections, such as class, sexuality, and ethnicity.

Although bodily decline is inevitable for both men and women, and particularly salient from middle age on, middle age can also be seen as a time of relative privilege with professional career peaks and respect from peers (Calasanti & King, 2018). The cumulative resources gained by experience and age have been explored in a specific field of middle-aged gay men (Simpson, 2016). These resources are referred to as 'ageing capital', which consists of, for example, emotional strength and self-acceptance, to distance oneself from younger gay men, who are 'untrustworthy, selfish, and obsessed with body and appearance' (Simpson, 2016, p. 13). By doing this, the older men are, on one hand, accumulating their capital, but also reinforcing intergenerational conflict and expressing reverse ageism towards younger men. Moreover, the body of literature which has examined body dissatisfaction in heterosexual and non-heterosexual populations suggests that gay men report more dissatisfaction with their appearances in later life than heterosexual men (Tiggemann, Martins, & Kirkbride, 2007) and experience a stronger pressure to invest in appearance work (Jones & Pugh, 2005). Lesbian women have been said to suffer from the same 'normative discontent' (Rodin, Silberstein, & Striegel-Moore, 1984) with their bodies as heterosexual women, especially concerning weight and ageing appearances (Huxley, Clarke, & Halliwell, 2014). Research on the intersections of gender, ethnicity, and age is scarce; however, there are indications that non-European men are more satisfied with their appearances than European men (Hurd Clarke & Bennett, 2015). Similarly, older women with non-European backgrounds express less

concern with body weight and are more satisfied with their appearances than European women (Schuler et al., 2008).

In sum, it might not solely be a question of gendered double standards, but also a question of social class that mediates the norms regarding ageing. For advantaged social classes, physical appearance is more important, whereas working-class people accept bodily decline more easily. While considering the recent claims of replacing the traditional highbrow cultural capital with more inclusive and less hierarchical emerging cultural capital, these capitals (e.g. knowledge on popular culture) can also be seen as diminishing with age even though appropriately maintained. Although bodily decline is a common accompaniment to ageing, it can also bring privileges for ageing upper- and middle-class people. Upper middle-class women and men have social, cultural, and economic resources to take care of their ageing appearances by investing in cosmetic care or other beauty enhancement practices. They may also have the opportunity to emphasise other assets, such as occupational status, which might not be possible for people from disadvantaged backgrounds. However, this may act as a double-edged sword, as those who have the means are expected to invest the time and money in enhancing themselves in a manner reminiscent of Foucault's theorising on governmentality and self-regulation.

Research questions, data, and methods

Our study investigates whether men and women internalise ageist norms differently and explores how self-identified class status affects normative pressures of maintaining one's physical appearance in a culture where young, slim, and toned appearances are held as ideals, despite the inevitability of ageing.

We start from an assumption wherein gender norms mean that the physical features of old age are less detrimental to the self-images of men than women, resulting in a more positive subjective evaluation of one's physical appearance in ageing men. Secondly, we expected that women consider physical appearance as more important than men and that this would not diminish in older age groups, as women are evaluated by others and by themselves based on physical appearance. We also anticipated that women would worry more about how ageing affects their physical appearance. We suspected that the effect of social class might emerge less straightforwardly for women than men, but expected to find differences.

We asked:

RQ1: How do age and social class affect subjective self-evaluations of attractiveness in men and women?

RQ2: How do age and social class affect the amount of importance men and women place on physical appearance?

RQ3: Is there a relationship between age group and ageing-related insecurities in men and women of different social classes?

Study sample

The analysis utilised survey data collected in the spring of 2016. The purpose of the survey was to collect data on the aspects and meanings of physical appearance in the Finnish context. The survey was distributed by mail to a simple random sample of 4000 Finns. The sample was selected from the Population Register Centre of Finland, and it represents the 15 to 74-year-old Finnish speaking population in Finland. Respondents were also allowed to complete the survey online. The final sample included 3994 Finns, as those who could not be reached were omitted from the sample. A total of 1600 Finns responded, amounting to a 40% response rate. Of those surveyed, 280 responded online, while 1320 respondents delivered their responses by mail. As is typical in a survey research, younger men are somewhat under-represented in our final data (1–3 percentage points compared to the general population), whereas older women are, to some extent, over-represented (3–4 percentage points compared to the general population).

Measures: dependent variables

We approach RQ1 by studying the *subjective evaluation of one's appearance*. This subjective variable was measured with the question, 'How would you rate your own attractiveness in comparison to others of the same age and gender as you?' It must be noted that in using this measure our interest lies in the subjective perceptions of appearance. Individuals' personal assessments may be different from that of others and these operationalisations are not used to measure the same thing. Respondents were instructed to consider their appearance as a whole, taking into account facial features, body shape, and size as well as their style of dressing and grooming. The original five-point Likert-scale was reduced to three points: 1 = not attractive, 2 = neutral, and 3 = attractive. The dependent variable *importance of physical appearance* was used to answer RQ2. Respondents were asked whether they considered physical appearance as an important part of themselves on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 = completely disagree to 5 = completely agree. In order to answer RQ3, which concerns the *effects of ageing on one's physical appearance*, the respondents were asked to evaluate how worried they were about how ageing affects their appearance on the same 5-point scale collapsed into three categories: 1 = disagree, 2 = neutral/average, and 3 = agree.

Measures: independent variables

Our independent variables were age, respondent gender, and social class. Age is measured in years and is included as a four-class variable: 15–29 years, 30–44 years, 45–59 years, and finally 60–75 years to keep the groups representative of age differences, without risking their statistical power. With the respondent gender, we refer to evaluator-identified gender coded as 'Male' and 'Female'. The measure for social class is self-identified and coded as 'Upper middle', 'Lower middle', 'Working class', and 'Other', from the original six-point measure: upper class and upper middle class in the first group and 'none' and 'else' in the last group, 'Other'. However, since our focus is on the differences between social classes, that is, upper-middle, lower-middle, and working-class people, we excluded 'others' in the visualisation (Fig. 3).

We included control variables in our regression model which, according to previous research, are associated with attitudes related to ageing and physical appearance. These variables are partner status (e.g. Hurd Clarke & Griffin, 2008), economic activity (e.g. Riach & Cutcher, 2014), and personal income. Partner status is included as a dummy variable, referring to either being single or other, indicating that the respondent is in some type of partnership. Economic activity is coded as *working* and *other*. Personal income per month was measured as net income (euros per month) and is included in our regression models as log income to decrease the skewness typical of income distributions. A descriptive overview of the variables is shown in Table A1 (Appendix 1).

Methodology and analysis

We used ordered logistic regression to examine whether men and women experience the process of ageing differently. Furthermore, we examined whether this process varies by self-identified social class. Ordered logistic regression is a suitable way to analyse ordinal variables, since it makes assumptions only about the order of the categories of the dependent variable, not the distance between the categories. This being the case, it is not assumed that the distance between all the values is the same. We tested the parallel regression assumption or the proportional odds assumption with the Brant test, which verified this assumption. In other words, the odds ratios between men and women are assumed to be the same, irrespective of which categories are examined, that is, comparing not important or not good-looking to neutral or average (i.e. 5 vs. 3 + 1) or comparing neutral or average to important or good-looking (5 + 3 vs. 1) (e.g. Long, 1997).

In the first part of our analysis, we conducted an ordered logistic regression for all dependent variables separated by gender—by adding age with control variables and then adding age and class with control variables. The first set of analyses examined how ageing is perceived, and then the impact of social class in different age groups. Ordered logistic regression is reported as odds ratios (OR), in the same way as ordinary logistic regression is reported.

In the second part of the analysis, we examined the interaction between respondent gender, age, and social class, that is, we examined the differences in how ageing and physical appearance are perceived by men and women of different social classes, with other relevant factors controlled for. To allow for comparisons across models, only respondents with valid scores on all the variables ($N = 1303$, with 744 female respondents and 559 male respondents) were included in our models. This time, we present the differences in ageing for men and women as average marginal effects (AME). We converted the odds ratios because these AME estimates are easier to interpret, and are not affected by unobserved heterogeneity related to the independent variables like logistic regression (and ordered logistic regression) estimates are affected (Mood, 2010). In our figures, the regression estimates are reported as predicted probabilities: describing the probability of perceiving physical appearance in a certain way in different age groups and social classes. We visualise our results with a *coefplot*-command, where the results from multiple models can be freely combined and arranged in a single graph (Jann, 2014).

All statistical analyses were performed by using Stata version 15.1. The full models for all outcomes are displayed in Supplementary Table A2 (Appendix 2) and reported as AME separately for both respondent genders.

Results

To answer our research questions, we first examined how age, gender, and self-identified class position affect subjective evaluations of appearance (RQ1), the importance of appearance (RQ2), and concern about the effects of ageing on one's appearance (RQ3).

Table 1 shows that when it comes to RQ1, self-evaluated attractiveness compared to people of the same age and gender, the perceptions of physical appearance are not different for men and women. People older than 45 evaluated themselves slightly less attractive than those in the youngest age group, under thirty. The people over 65 years consider themselves substantially less attractive than their peers. People who identify as upper-middle class or lower-middle class are more likely to consider themselves attractive than those who identified as working class. When controlling for income, we found an association: people with higher income tend to define themselves as more attractive than people with lower income do.

In RQ2, we found that women consider appearance to be a significantly more important part of themselves than men. People in the older groups considered physical appearance less important than people in the youngest age group. The difference was most significant in the oldest age group, over 65. Physical appearance was more crucial for upper-middle-class and lower-middle-class people when compared to working-class people. We also found an association between income and importance of appearance: people with higher income considered physical appearance as a more important part of themselves compared to those with lower income.

When it comes to RQ3, worrying about how age affects one's appearance, women were considerably more worried about age changing their appearance. Worry about ageing was significantly more prevalent for people in the older age groups than the youngest group, and the worry was the highest in the third age group (45–59 years old). Class or other factors did not affect these concerns.

Fig. 1 presents the distribution of answers with the recorded variable by gender and age of respondents. In the first question about perceived attractiveness compared to others of the same age and gender, men in

Table 1

Perceptions of physical appearance by gender, age, class, controlling for income, economic activity, and partner status (odds ratios, standard errors in parentheses). +

Variable	Attractiveness	Importance	Worry
Female (ref. male)	0.015 (0.118)	0.855*** (0.146)	1.014*** (0.121)
Age (ref. 15–29)			
30–44	–0.235 (0.206)	–0.412 (0.301)	0.706*** (0.213)
45–59	–0.487* (0.196)	–0.653* (0.265)	0.960*** (0.210)
65–74	–0.884*** (0.190)	–0.992*** (0.258)	0.706*** (0.202)
Self-identified class (ref. working class)			
Upper middle	0.934*** (0.166)	0.774*** (0.200)	–0.058 (0.160)
Lower middle	0.312* (0.156)	0.351* (0.179)	0.080 (0.154)
Other	0.046 (0.177)	0.089 (0.216)	–0.114 (0.178)
Income	0.282* (0.110)	0.276* (0.125)	–0.078 (0.120)
Working (ref. not working)	–0.003 (0.149)	–0.110 (0.186)	0.124 (0.157)
Single (ref. not single)	–0.211 (0.147)	0.036 (0.174)	–0.039 (0.139)
/			
cut1	0.152 (0.751)	–0.432 (0.824)	0.703 (0.815)
cut2	2.643*** (0.755)	1.087 (0.816)	1.664* (0.815)
N	1303	1303	1303

+ $p < 0.1$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.

the youngest age group, 15–29-year-olds (39.7%), perceive themselves as more attractive, whereas women experience this most in the second age group, 30–44 years (41.1%). Perceived attractiveness is generally at its lowest in the oldest age group, 60–74-year-olds. In the second question, considering appearance as an important part of oneself, most men in the second age group, 30–44-year-olds, considered appearance an important part of themselves (73%), whereas appearance was extremely important for 91.4% of the women in the youngest age group, 15–29-year-olds. Appearance was slightly less important for the people in the oldest age, 60–74 years old group. The third question, worry about ageing, was highly gendered: men experienced significantly less stress about age affecting their appearance than women. Further, 21.8% of men in the third age group, 45–59 years old, worried that age affected their appearance, whereas women were most worried about ageing earlier: 30–44 years (44.2%). Overall, the worry about ageing affecting their appearances was in the oldest group, 60–74-year-olds, almost similar to the youngest group.

Fig. 2 presents the distribution of answers with the recoded variables by gender and class of respondents. In the first question about attractiveness compared to others of the same age and gender, about half of the upper-class men (45.3%) and women (48.6%) perceived themselves as more attractive. Perceptions of attractiveness do not differ significantly in the rest of the classes. In the second question, about considering appearance as an important part of oneself, a majority of upper-middle-class men (74.3%) considered appearance as an important part of themselves and the percentage was higher (85.6%) for upper-middle-class women. The third question, on worry about

ageing, elicited a different reaction from the previous responses—there was very little or no class difference between both genders. Women in the lower middle class were most worried about age affecting their appearance (40.9%) and women in the upper middle class were least worried (33.8%).

Table 2 shows the differences between men and women separately. In RQ1 (self-evaluated attractiveness), compared to the youngest age group both men and women evaluated themselves slightly less attractive after age 45 years, and substantially less attractive than their peers after 65 years. Compared to the working-class, people who identify as upper-middle-class are more likely to consider themselves attractive. The effect remains for women in the lower middle class. When controlling for income, we saw that women with higher income tend to define themselves as more attractive than those with lower income do.

Regarding RQ2, we found that appearance matters less to women in older age: women in the older groups considered physical appearance less important than people in the youngest age group. The difference was most significant in the oldest age group, over 65. For men, physical appearance was a more important part of themselves for upper-middle-class men than among the reference group, that is, working-class men.

In RQ3, worrying about how age affects one's appearance, women were considerably more worried about age changing their appearance. Worry about ageing was significantly more prevalent for people in the older age groups than in the youngest group. For men, worry was the highest in the third (45–59 years) and fourth (60–74 years) age groups, but for women worry about ageing was mostly prevalent in the second (30–44 years) and the third (45–59 years) age group. Social class, economic activity, and partner status did not affect these concerns.

Fig. 3 shows the interaction between age and social class separately for both genders after controlling for income, economic activity, and partner status. The differences are presented as predicted probabilities, describing the probability for highest responses (4 or 5, here rescaled as 3) on the Likert-scale on previously presented questions. The responses are also visualised as follows: upper section for women and lower section for men, x-line representing age groups, and y-line representing self-identified class. The full models for each question are presented in Appendix 2 as average marginal effects.

The group 'other' was included in our analyses but excluded from these visualisations for the sake of clarity, as we primarily focussed on whether upper-middle-class, lower-middle-class, and working-class respondents differ in their attitudes towards ageing. The line with a circle marker describes the likelihood of feeling attractive, considering appearance as important, and worrying about ageing for the upper-middle class, whereas the line with a square is similar for the lower-middle class. Respondents who identified themselves as working-class are marked with a diamond.

To obtain more exact information on the magnitude and statistical significance of differences between the groups, we conducted a pairwise comparison between different combinations of gender, age, and social class.

The pairwise comparisons revealed that men and women who define themselves as upper middle class do not differ across age groups in their probability of perceiving themselves as attractive. When comparing the probabilities of upper-middle-class men considering themselves attractive to that of the other classes between age groups, our results show class-related differences for men. Working-class men in the second age group (30–44 years) were 22 percentage points less likely to report themselves as attractive ($p = 0.040$). In the same age group, those who identified as 'other' were 27 percentage points less likely ($p = 0.018$) to do so. In the third age group (45–59 years), the lower-middle-class ($p = 0.015$) and other ($p = 0.014$) men were 23 percentage points less likely to consider themselves as attractive as compared to upper-middle-class men. In the oldest age group (60–74 years), lower-middle-class men were 17 percentage points less likely ($p = 0.009$) to consider themselves attractive than upper-middle-class men.

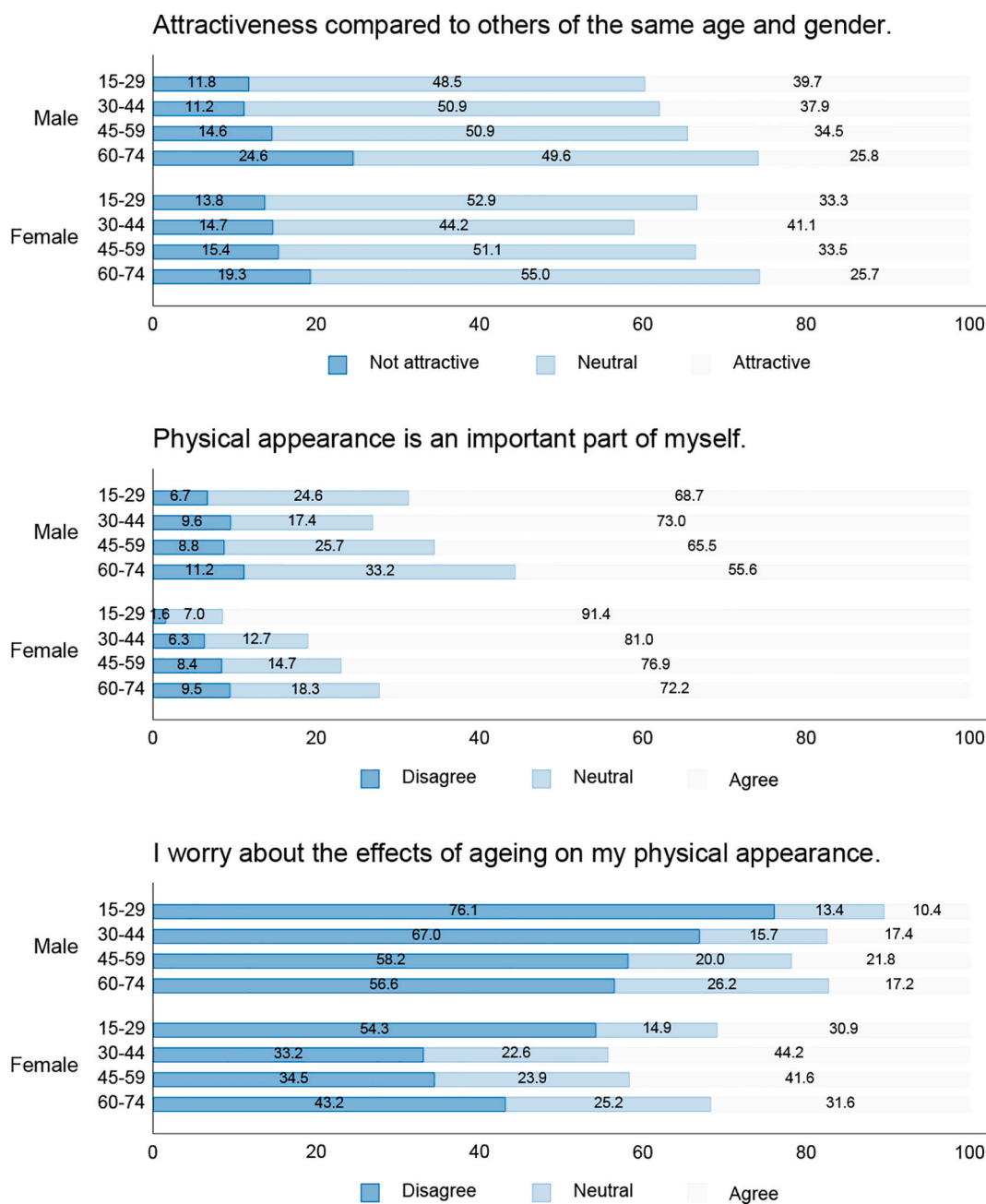


Fig. 1. Distribution of dependent variables by the age and gender of respondents.

When comparing the probabilities of upper-middle-class women considering themselves attractive to that of the other social classes across age groups, the classed differences are evident. In the youngest age group (15–29 years), working-class women were 31 percentage points less likely to consider themselves attractive than upper-middle-class women were ($p = 0.014$). In the second group (30–44 years), the gap in self-perceived attractiveness between social classes was not traceable; however, in the oldest age groups the statistical differences between social classes are striking. When comparing the probabilities of 45–59-year-old lower-middle-class women, working-class women, and other women to upper-middle-class women, the likelihood of women from the three classes considering themselves attractive is 30 percentage points ($p = 0.000$, $p = 0.000$, and $p = 0.004$, respectively) below that of upper-middle-class women. The effect of class remains the same in the oldest age group (60–74 years), where the probability of working-class women considering themselves attractive is 15

percentage points ($p = 0.025$) less than upper-middle-class women, whereas the same rate for women who identify as 'other' is 18 percentage points less ($p = 0.004$).

When it comes to RQ2, considering appearance an important part of oneself, women and respondents in the youngest age groups have a higher probability of reporting physical appearance as more important. Again, it also seems that regardless of gender, upper-middle-class people value physical appearance more than others in most age groups. In all age groups, physical appearance seems to be least important for women who identify as 'other', but for men the effect of class seems more mixed. Once again, we conducted a pairwise comparison to obtain more exact information on the magnitude and statistical significance of differences between different combinations of gender, age, and class regarding the importance of appearance.

Pairwise comparisons revealed that women and men of different classes value physical appearance differently. Upper-class men and

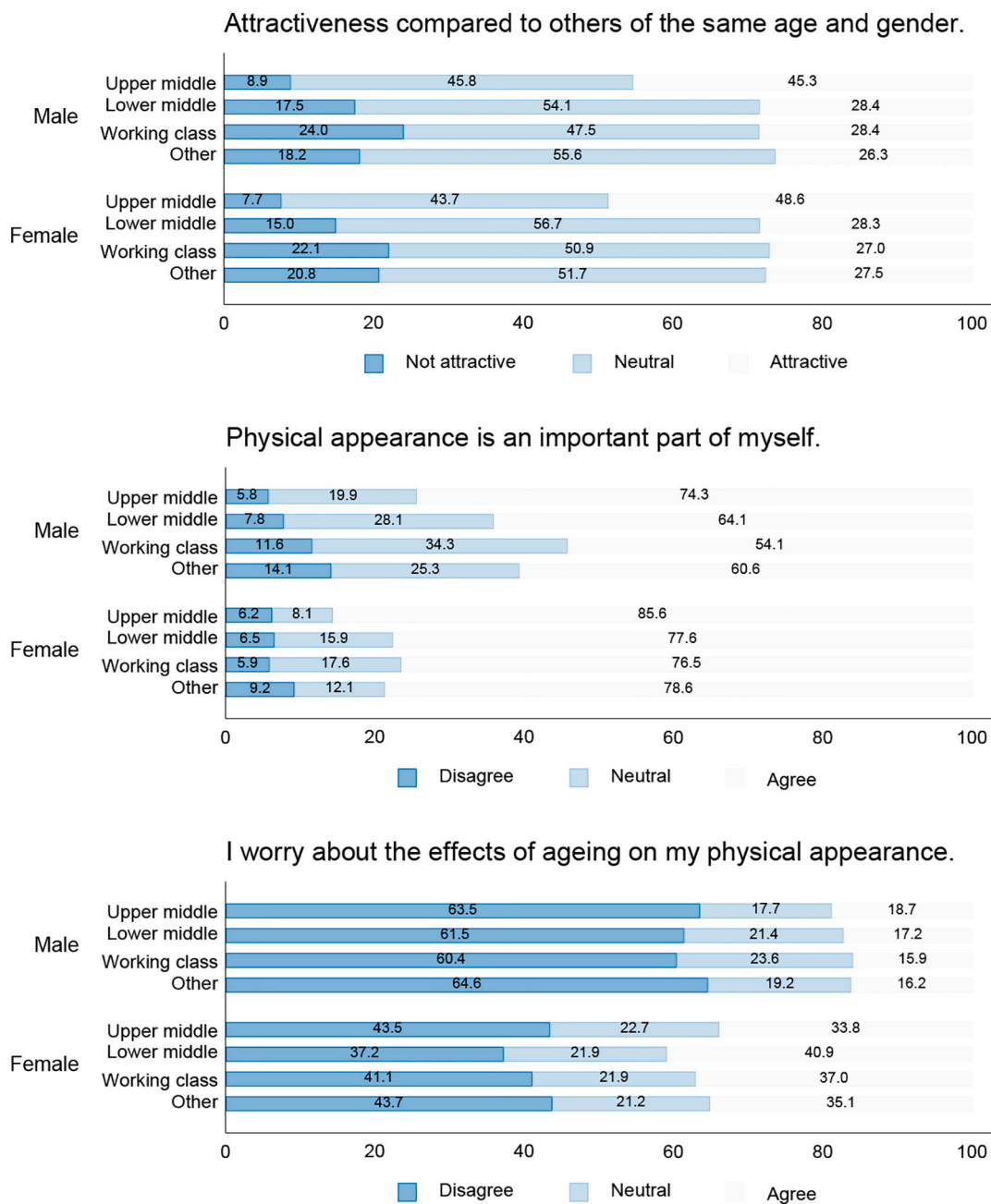


Fig. 2. Distribution of dependent variables by gender and the self-reported class of respondents.

women in all age groups do not differ in the extent to which they perceive appearance as an important part of their identity. Working-class women in the youngest age group (15–29 years) were 30 percentage points ($p = 0.005$) more likely than men of the same age and class to report physical appearance as an important part of themselves. The results emerge similarly in the third group (45–59 years), with a rate of 25 percentage points ($p = 0.008$). When looking at women across classes, there seem to be no differences in the probabilities between age groups. When focusing the analysis solely on men, it seems that upper-middle-class men value appearance more than men in other self-identified classes. When contrasting their responses to other classes in different age groups, the 45–59-year-old men showed significant statistical difference. Lower-middle-class men scored 26 percentage points ($p = 0.003$) less likely to report appearance as important compared to upper-middle-class men. Upper-middle-class men consider appearance 41 percentage points ($p = 0.000$) higher than working-class

men.

The last section of the figure answers RQ3, showing that people in the older age groups worry about the effects that ageing has on their looks a bit more than people in the younger groups. Men, regardless of class, are significantly less likely to worry about ageing than women. Overall, those who appear most concerned about ageing are 30–44-year-old working-class women, closely followed by lower-middle-class women in the 45–59 age group. As the differences between men and women are so evident, we conducted pairwise comparisons of women's responses about worrying about ageing at different intersections of age and social class. When examining the responses, the only statistically significant difference was found in the second age group, 30–44 years, where women who identify as 'other' in terms of social class were 21 percentage points ($p = 0.030$) less likely to worry about ageing than women who identify as upper-middle-class. However, it is difficult to interpret this finding as the group 'other' is heterogeneous. The

Table 2

Perceptions of physical appearance for men and women by age and class, controlling for income, economic activity, and partner status (odds ratios, standard errors in parentheses).

	Attractiveness		Importance		Worry	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
Age (ref. 14–29)						
30–44	–0.394 (0.312)	–0.116 (0.270)	–0.115 (0.409)	–0.980* (0.438)	0.555 (0.361)	0.841** (0.267)
45–59	–0.548 ⁺ (0.310)	–0.431 ⁺ (0.249)	–0.299 (0.352)	–1.224** (0.415)	1.152*** (0.349)	0.862** (0.264)
60–74	–0.913** (0.295)	–0.880*** (0.243)	–0.559 ⁺ (0.337)	–1.656*** (0.394)	1.195*** (0.333)	0.396 (0.251)
Self-identified class (ref. working class)						
Upper middle	0.833*** (0.247)	1.042*** (0.227)	0.928*** (0.261)	0.566 ⁺ (0.299)	0.143 (0.256)	–0.157 (0.200)
Lower middle	0.071 (0.243)	0.516** (0.199)	0.513* (0.252)	0.166 (0.245)	0.113 (0.243)	0.121 (0.200)
Other	–0.130 (0.286)	0.191 (0.228)	–0.166 (0.338)	0.261 (0.277)	–0.061 (0.313)	–0.135 (0.217)
Income	0.026 (0.194)	0.479*** (0.126)	0.217 (0.166)	0.374* (0.179)	–0.214 (0.202)	–0.015 (0.138)
Working (ref. not working)	0.291 (0.238)	–0.210 (0.190)	0.072 (0.263)	–0.358 (0.258)	0.403 (0.255)	0.005 (0.194)
Single (ref. not single)	–0.419 ⁺ (0.244)	–0.067 (0.183)	0.445 ⁺ (0.261)	–0.333 (0.226)	0.150 (0.232)	–0.116 (0.171)
/						
cut1	–1.840 (1.337)	1.632* (0.831)	–0.499 (1.128)	–1.137 (1.132)	0.089 (1.379)	0.019 (0.894)
cut2	0.662 (1.333)	4.145*** (0.833)	1.220 (1.119)	0.105 (1.124)	1.198 (1.382)	0.888 (0.891)
N	559	744	559	744	559	744

⁺ $p < 0.1$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.

differences in other age groups were not statistically significant.

Discussion and conclusions

The underlying assumption of this study was that physical appearance is socially and personally significant in a culture where disparities, particularly those related to age, gender, and social class, are salient. We focussed on gender and social class in ageing as it has received limited attention in recent discussions around physical appearance; research on the subject has generally focused on young bodies or ageing populations *per se*. In this paper, we aimed to empirically explore how 15 to 74-year-old Finnish speaking men and women internalise the ageist norms of consumer society. Secondly, we explored whether a self-identified class affects the internalisation of these norms.

When examining self-evaluated attractiveness by age and across gender (RQ1), our results indicate that, at first glance, men and women experience the loss of youthful appearance similarly: both feel less attractive as age increases. However, previous literature suggests that if we pay attention to social class, it affects the experience, but more drastically for women, supporting our hypothesis of triple standards. In our data, older working-class women perceive themselves less attractive than older upper middle-class women; upper-class women seem to be more confident with their appearances regardless of age. Therefore, our results are in line with Bourdieu's theory of upper-class self-confidence, wherein ageing is not considered to be significantly eroding one's aesthetic appeal. Similarly, our findings echo those of [Elfving-Hwang \(2016\)](#), positing that engaging in beauty practices is a way for middle class women to signify control over the ageing body and a way

to maintain positive self-esteem. Concurrently, these perceptions could also be interpreted as self-directed ageism. Our results are also similar to [McMullin and Cairney's \(2004\)](#) finding that women with less socio-economic status reflected more negatively on the experience of growing old. According to their study, financially disadvantaged women view ageing as the progressive loss of vitality, whereas affluent women experience it as a time to enjoy self-confidence and power gained over the years. Our data contradict [Dumas et al., \(2005\)](#), who report that working-class women are generally satisfied with their appearance, whereas women with more economic and cultural capital were less satisfied with theirs, showing the confounding factors at play when attempting to determine self-reports of attractiveness related to ageing.

For the importance of appearance (RQ2), our findings seem to be in line with previous research, which concludes that physical appearance matters more to women than men. Although it matters less with age, the difference remains considerable between men and women. Examining the interaction of age and social class, we found that self-identifying as upper-middle-class correlates with increased importance of appearance for older men, but not for women. As self-identified class did not moderate the effect for women, our data support earlier feminist theorising and empirical data that women are equally aware of their declining physical appearance or aesthetic capital, regardless of their class position. This result supports the literature on double standards of ageing by feminist writers such as [Sontag \(1972\)](#) and [Wolf \(1991\)](#). On the other hand, social class predicted importance of appearance for men of the upper-middle class, especially in the third group, age 45–59 years, because they valued their appearance as much as upper middle-class women of similar age who were significantly higher than

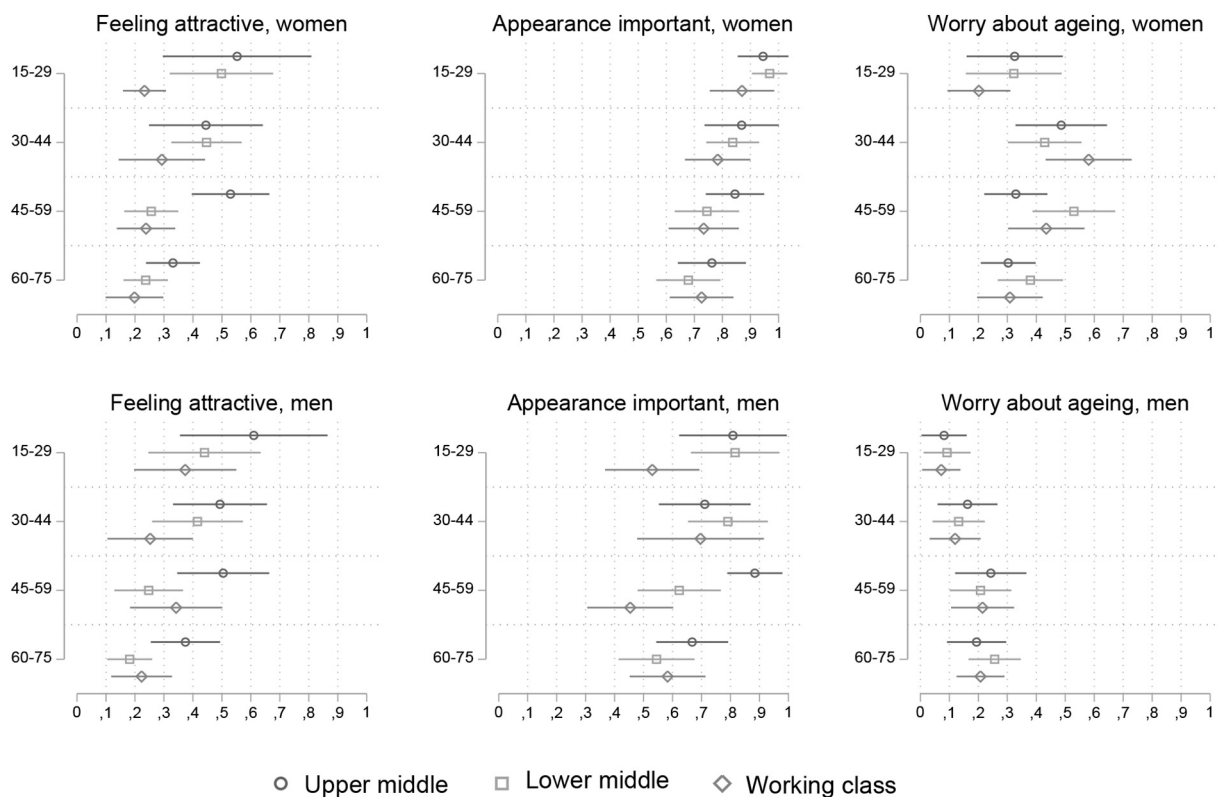


Fig. 3. Effect of age and social class separately for both genders after controlling for income, economic activity, and partner status as predicted probabilities.

the other social classes. This finding was in line with Calasanti and King's study (2018), where professional middle-class middle-aged men became aware of their possible status decline and refused this subordination by focusing on their bodies. Aesthetic claims can be tied to the occupational requirements of upper-class men, and as such, be part of their embodied aesthetic capital in male-dominant working life, as in Riach and Cutcher's study (2014). These findings can also be interpreted as supporting the triple standard hypothesis for men.

When examining worry about how ageing affects one's appearance (RQ3), our results indicate that the norms regarding physical appearance are internalised and experienced differently by men and women. This finding supports our theory-based assumption of the existence of ageing double standards. Our results show that women are substantially more concerned about ageing, especially from 30 years of age as it affects their physical appearance throughout their lives. On the other hand, men experience this worry from 45 years of age, but considerably less overall. This finding is in line with Hurd Clarke and Korotchenko's (2011) study on ageing and the body, which posited that men are less concerned about their ageing appearances or age-related changes in their bodies. We found no evidence of class-based differences except in the 30–44-year-old women who identify as 'other', who worry less about ageing than all other social classes in the same age group. Our findings suggest that the youthful norms of consumer society are equally internalised by the majority of women irrespective of social background. The normative standards for men to remain youthful apply from much later on and with significantly less intensity. An illustrative example of this imbalance is that men in the most worried age group are considerably less worried about ageing than the women in the youngest age group.

When analysing our findings in light of recent Bourdieusian understanding of physical appearance as a form of capital (Anderson et al., 2010; Holla & Kuipers, 2015), we can assume that as women are socialised to invest in their appearances and are valued for bearing this capital, maintaining it seems more important to them. Previous

literature suggests that physical attractiveness remains central to a woman's sense of identity and women compare their appearance to that of their youth (Hurd Clarke, 2002). This unavoidably affects their attitudes towards their ageing appearances, and they worry about the decrease in their 'market value' in different contexts. Yet, what constitutes aesthetic capital differs by context and social group. People from different social classes face varying demands from their environment regarding the maintenance of aesthetic capital. For example, in a consumerist society that ascribes worth to beauty, upper middle-class people are expected to care for their appearance because of the cultural and economic resources available to them.

The importance of aesthetic capital is affected by the presence or absence of other resources. One might assume that the upper middle-class respondents in our study experience ageing as more drastically affecting their appearance because they value it more than people of other classes. However, as they can either emphasise other resources (e.g. wealth or skills) or invest in other resources (e.g. career achievements) to shape the experience of ageing, it might not be as damaging to their self-esteem. This has been referred to as 'relative privilege' of professional career peaks and respect from peers (Calasanti & King, 2018) or 'ageing capital', the cumulative resources gained by professional career experience and age resulting in emotional strength and self-acceptance (Simpson, 2016).

We acknowledge that there are also limitations to our study. First, as we focus on self-identified class with one option being 'other', we cannot be sure how these respondents wish to be interpreted. Second, we understand that our sample size shrank, as we included only observations with valid scores on all of the variables in our regression analysis. As a result, some of the groups in our interactions comprise a fairly small number of observations. Additionally, one important limitation of our research lies in the fact that our findings are based on cross-sectional data, not panel data, so only interpretations between age groups are feasible. Finally, we also acknowledge that this study is limited by the lack of information on the respondents' sexual

orientation, marital status and racial/ethnic origin, which, according to previous research, might influence one's perceptions of physical appearance and ageing.

Our research has a number of implications for further studies. As we identified the existence of 'triple standards' of ageing, it would be interesting to apply an intersectional approach to quantitative ageing studies. Previous research has found conflicting results on working-class women's experiences on ageing, a discrepancy that should be studied further. Our results concerning men suggest more work is needed on ageing masculinities and the role of appearances in so-called successful ageing. This topic could be approached, for example, by expanding the concept of 'ageing capital' (Simpson, 2016) to all men or examining the 'relative privilege' (Calasanti & King, 2018) in different fields of work.

Notwithstanding these limitations, this study is, to our knowledge, the first to examine the double or triple standards of ageing by focusing on the internalisation of ageist norms with nationally representative data. The strength of our study lies in the intersectional approach, which not only allows for comparison between the age groups, but also examines the internalisation of the ageist appearance norms in consumer society at the population level. As our study was conducted in Finland, a country with comparatively high levels of gender equality (World Economic Forum, 2020) and a shared ethos of natural beauty and modesty (Sarpila, 2013), ageist norms might be internalised here to a lesser extent. On the other hand, it has also been stated that in consumer culture ageing is approached individually, with consuming practices and lifestyle choices mediating the influence of socio-demographic factors on the individual experience of ageing. Thus, we believe that our results, which are focused on the Nordic people, can serve as an interesting and useful reference for future studies on populations outside the Global North and in more diverse countries within it.

Acknowledgements

Corresponding author, Erica Åberg, would like to thank Dr. Soc. Sci. Aki Koivula and Project Researcher Laura Salonen for their helpful comments, endless patience and statistical guidance during this research. We would also like to thank the Emil Aaltonen Foundation and the Academy of Finland (grant number 325813) for funding this research.

Declarations of interest

None.

Supplementary data

Supplementary data to this article can be found online at <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jaging.2020.100876>.

References

- Anderson, T. L., Grunert, C., Katz, A., & Lovascio, S. (2010). Aesthetic capital: A research review on beauty perks and penalties. *Sociology Compass*, 4(8), 564–575.
- Barrett, A. E., & Von Rohr, C. (2008). Gendered perceptions of aging: An examination of college students. *The International Journal of Aging and Human Development*, 67(4), 359–386.
- Berman, P. W., O'Nan, B. A., & Floyd, W. (1981). The double standard of aging and the social situation: Judgments of attractiveness of the middle-aged woman. *Sex Roles*, 7(2), 87–96.
- Borchorst, A., & Siim, B. (2002). The women-friendly welfare states revisited. *NORA: Nordic Journal of Women's Studies*, 10(2), 90–98.
- Bordini, G. S., & Sperb, T. M. (2013). Sexual double standard: A review of the literature between 2001 and 2010. *Sexuality & Culture*, 17(4), 686–704.
- Bordo, S. (1993). *Unbearable weight: Feminism, Western culture and the body*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Bourdieu, P. (1984). *Distinction: A social critique of the judgement of taste*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Calasanti, T., & King, N. (2015). Intersectionality and age. *Routledge Handbook of Cultural Gerontology* (pp. 193–200).
- Calasanti, T., & King, N. (2018). The dynamic nature of gender and aging bodies. *Journal of Aging Studies*, 45, 11–17.
- Calasanti, T. M., & Slevin, K. F. (2001). *Gender, social inequalities, and aging*. (Rowman Altamira).
- Calasanti, T. M., & Slevin, K. F. (2013). *Age matters: Re-aligning feminist thinking*. Routledge.
- Deusch, F. M., Zalenski, C. M., & Clark, M. E. (1986). Is there a double standard of aging? 1. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 16(9), 771–785.
- Dumas, A., Laberge, S., & Straka, S. M. (2005). Older women's relations to bodily appearance: The embodiment of social and biological conditions of existence. *Ageing & Society*, 25(6), 883–902.
- Elfvig-Hwang, J. (2016). Old, down and out? Appearance, body work and positive ageing among elderly south Korean women. *Journal of Aging Studies*, 38, 6–15.
- Featherstone, M. (1985). Leisure, symbolic power and the life course. *The Sociological Review*, 33, 113–138.
- Foschi, M. (2000). Double standards for competence: Theory and research. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 26(1), 21–42.
- Franzoi, S. L., & Koehler, V. (1998). Age and gender differences in body attitudes: A comparison of young and elderly adults. *The International Journal of Aging and Human Development*, 47(1), 1–10.
- Gosselink, C. A., Cox, D. L., & McClure, S. J. & De Jong, M. L. (2008). Ravishing or ravaged: Women's relationships with women in the context of aging and western beauty culture. *The International Journal of Aging and Human Development*, 66(4), 307–327.
- Granleese, J., & Sayer, G. (2006). Gendered ageism and "lookism": A triple jeopardy for female academics. *Women in Management Review*, 21(6), 500–517.
- Harris, M. B. (1994). Growing old gracefully: Age concealment and gender. *Journal of Gerontology*, 49(4), 149–158.
- Hausmann, R., Tyson, L. D. A., & Zahidi, S. (2012, August). *The global gender gap report 2012*. Geneva: World Economic Forum.
- Holla, S., & Kuipers, G. (2015). *Aesthetic capital. International Handbook for the Sociology of Art and Culture*. London: Routledge 290–304.
- Hurd Clarke, L. (2002). Beauty in later life: Older women's perceptions of physical attractiveness. *Canadian Journal on Aging/La revue canadienne du vieillissement*, 21(3), 429–442.
- Hurd Clarke, L., & Bennett, E. V. (2015). *Gender, ageing and appearance. Routledge Handbook of Cultural Gerontology*. London: Routledge 133–140.
- Hurd Clarke, L., & Griffin, M. (2008). Visible and invisible ageing: Beauty work as a response to ageism. *Ageing & Society*, 28(5), 653–674.
- Hurd Clarke, L., & Korotchenko, A. (2011). Aging and the body: A review. *Canadian Journal on Aging/La Revue canadienne du vieillissement*, 30(3), 495–510.
- Hurd, L. (2000). Older women's body image and embodied experience: An exploration. *Journal of Women & Aging*, 12(3–4), 77–97.
- Huxley, C. J., Clarke, V., & Halliwell, E. (2014). A qualitative exploration of whether lesbian and bisexual women are "protected" from sociocultural pressure to be thin. *Journal of Health Psychology*, 19(2), 273–284.
- Itzin, C., & Phillipson, C. (1993). *Age barriers at work*. Solihull: Metropolitan Authorities Recruitment Agency.
- Itzin, C., & Phillipson, C. (1995). Gendered ageism a double jeopardy for women in organizations. In C. Itzin, & C. Phillipson (Eds.), *Gender, Culture and Organizational Change Putting Theory into Practice* (pp. 81–90). London: Routledge.
- Jann, B. (2014). Plotting regression coefficients and other estimates. *The Stata Journal*, 14(4), 708–737.
- Jones, J., & Pugh, S. (2005). Ageing gay men: Lessons from the sociology of embodiment. *Men and Masculinities*, 7(3), 248–260.
- Kotter-Grühn, D., & Hess, T. M. (2012). So you think you look young? Matching older adults' subjective ages with age estimations provided by younger, middle-aged, and older adults. *International Journal of Behavioral Development*, 36(6), 468–475.
- Krekula, C. (2007). The intersection of age and gender: Reworking gender theory and social gerontology. *Current Sociology*, 55(2), 155–171.
- Krekula, C. (2016). Contextualizing older women's body images: Time dimensions, multiple reference groups, and age codings of appearance. *Journal of Women & Aging*, 28(1), 58–67.
- Kuipers, G. (2015). Beauty and distinction? The evaluation of appearance and cultural capital in five European countries. *Poetics*, 53, 38–51.
- Kukkonen, I., Åberg, E., Sarpila, O., & Pajunen, T. (2018). Exploitation of aesthetic capital—disapproved by whom? *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy*, 38(3/4), 312–328.
- Lister, R. (2009). A Nordic nirvana? Gender, citizenship, and social justice in the Nordic welfare states. *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State & Society*, 16(2), 242–278.
- Long, J. S. (1997). *Regression models for limited and categorical dependent variables*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- McMullin, J. A., & Cairney, J. (2004). Self-esteem and the intersection of age, class, and gender. *Journal of Aging Studies*, 18, 75–90. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jaging.2003.09.006>.
- Mears, A. (2015). Girls as elite distinction: The appropriation of bodily capital. *Poetics*, 53, 22–37.
- Mood, C. (2010). Logistic regression: Why we cannot do what we think we can do, and what we can do about it. *European Sociological Review*, 26(1), 67–82.
- Öberg, P., & Tornstam, L. (1999). Body images among men and women of different ages. *Ageing & Society*, 19(5), 629–644.
- Ojala, H., Calasanti, T., King, N., & Pietilä, I. (2016). Natural (ly) men: Masculinity and gendered anti-ageing practices in Finland and the USA. *Ageing & Society*, 36(2), 356–375.
- Plantenga, J., Remery, C., Figueiredo, H., & Smith, M. (2009). Towards a European Union

- gender equality index. *Journal of European Social Policy*, 19(1), 19–33.
- Prieur, A., & Savage, M. (2013). Emerging forms of cultural capital. *European Societies*, 15(2), 246–267.
- Riach, K., & Cutcher, L. (2014). Built to last: Ageing, class and the masculine body in a UK hedge fund. *Work, Employment and Society*, 28(5), 771–787.
- Rijken, A. J., & Liefbroer, A. C. (2016). Differences in family norms for men and women across Europe. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 78(4), 1097–1113.
- Rijken, A. J., & Merz, E. M. (2014). Double standards: Differences in norms on voluntary childlessness for men and women. *European Sociological Review*, 30(4), 470–482.
- Rodin, J., Silberstein, L., & Striegel-Moore, R. (1984). Women and weight: A normative discontent. *Nebraska symposium on motivation*. University of Nebraska Press.
- Sarpila, O. (2013). *Beauty for Sale-an empirical study of appearance-related consumption in Finland*. Turku, Finland: University of Turku.
- Sarpila, Outi, Koivula, Aki, Kukkonen, iIDA, Åberg, Erica, & Pajunen, Tero (2020). Double standards in the accumulation and utilisation of “aesthetic capital”. *PoeticsArticle* 101447. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.poetic.2020.101447>.
- Savage, M., Devine, F., Cunningham, N., Taylor, M., Li, Y., Hjellbrekke, J., & Miles, A. (2013). A new model of social class? Findings from the BBC’s great British class survey experiment. *Sociology*, 47(2), 219–250.
- Schuler, P. B., Vinci, D., Isosaari, R. M., Philipp, S. F., Todorovich, J., Roy, J. L., & Evans, R. R. (2008). Body-shape perceptions and body mass index of older African American and European American women. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Gerontology*, 23(3), 255–264.
- Simpson, P. (2016). *Middle-aged gay men, ageing and ageism: Over the rainbow?* Springer.
- Smith Maguire, J. (2008). Fit for consumption: Sociology and the business of fitness. London, Routledge: Abingdon.
- Sontag, S. (1972). The double standard of aging. *Saturday Review of Literature*, 39, 29–38.
- Thompson, E. H., Jr., & Langendoerfer, K. B. (2016). Older men’s blueprint for “being a man”. *Men and Masculinities*, 19(2), 119–147.
- Tiggemann, M. (2004). Body image across the adult life span: Stability and change. *Body Image*, 1(1), 29–41.
- Tiggemann, M., Martins, Y., & Kirkbride, A. (2007). Oh to be lean and muscular: Body image ideals in gay and heterosexual men. *Psychology of Men & Masculinity*, 8(1), 15.
- Twigg, J. (2004). The body, gender, and age: Feminist insights in social gerontology. *Journal of Aging Studies*, 18(1), 59–73.
- Twigg, J. (2013). *Fashion and age: Dress, the body and later life*. A&C Black.
- Twigg, J., & Majima, S. (2014). Consumption and the constitution of age: Expenditure patterns on clothing, hair and cosmetics among post-war ‘baby boomers’. *Journal of Aging Studies*, 30, 23–32.
- Uotinen, V. (1998). Age identification: A comparison between Finnish and north-American cultures. *The International Journal of Aging and Human Development*, 46(2), 109–124.
- Wilcox, S. (1997). Age and gender in relation to body attitudes: Is there a double standard of aging? *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 21(4), 549–565.
- Witz, A., Warhurst, C., & Nickson, D. (2003). The labour of aesthetics and the aesthetics of organization. *Organization*, 10(1), 33–54.
- Wolf, N. (1991). *The beauty myth: How images of beauty are used against women*. Random House.
- World Economic Forum (2020). Global gender gap report 2020. Available online. <https://www.weforum.org/reports/gender-gap-2020-report-100-years-pay-equality>.