

40+, 50+, 60+ ? or just a PLUS. Age in the labour market.

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The paper presents the process of social construction of old age in the labour market in Poland, which manifests itself through different age distinctions, such as chronological, social, psychological or cognitive age. The analysis of 30 in-depth interviews with employers in Małopolska region from small, medium and large enterprises, as well as expert interviews with representatives of labour market institutions comprises empirical material to formulate an answer to a question about the consequence of age signifiers for the situation of an individual in employment. In addition, some analysis of European Social Survey will be provided. Moreover, the paper illustrates the functioning of some mechanism of exclusion of older people from labour market, which despite the fact that efforts are being made in order to increase the effectiveness of the anti-discrimination legislation in Poland, are still particularly prominent in certain sectors of economy. The analysis provide input into the debate about the omnipresent usage of chronological age thresholds, and especially about the “magical” 50+, being deployed in various types of social policies and other legislative documents, contributing to the creation of an image of members of those groups as needy, problematic and helpless. The paper argues to reevaluate the chronologically based types of eligibility.