



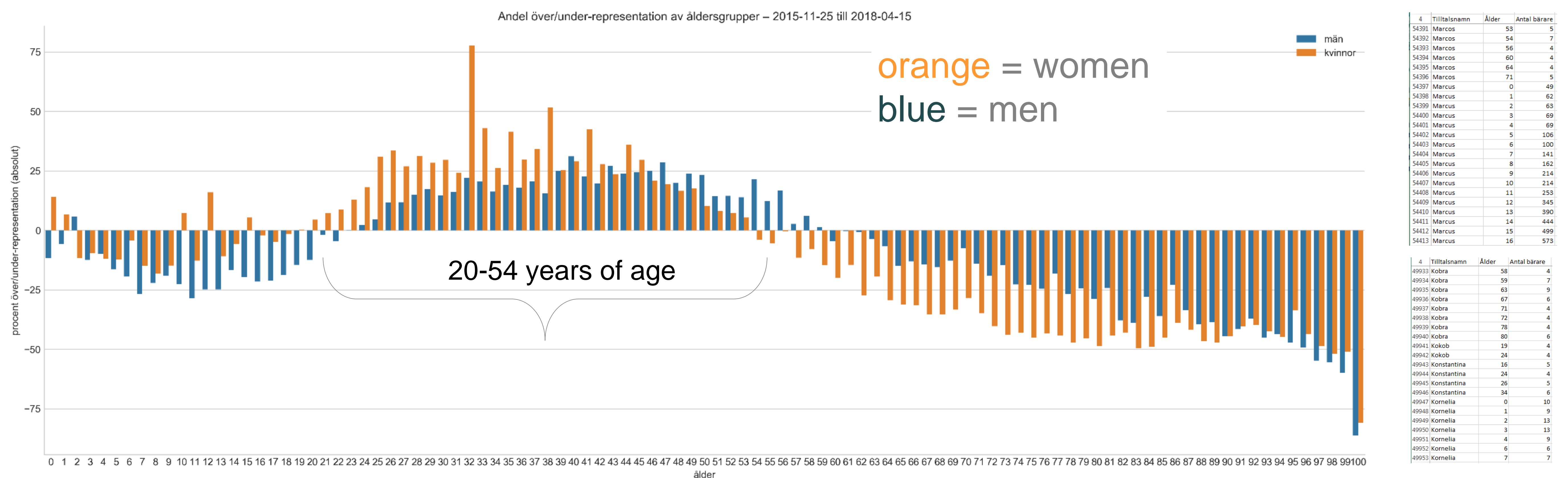
AGEISM AND SWEDISH MEDIA

Dimitrios Kokkinakis¹, Maria Edström², Max Berggren³

Centre for Ageing and Health at the University of Gothenburg (AgeCap)

¹Department of Swedish, University of Gothenburg, Sweden ²Department of Journalism, Media & Communication (JMG), University of Gothenburg, Sweden ³Prognosis

Over- and underrepresentation of age by gender in Swedish online news media 2017



Comment: Pilot study 1 is based on 4,7 million texts from 39 online news outlets in Sweden 2015-11-25 – 2018-04-15 Image by Max Berggren

BACKGROUND

Ageism can be seen as a “social disease”, a casual or systematic prejudice, stereotyping and discriminating against individuals or groups on the basis of their age. This is an area of growing concern, particularly the role of *mainstream* media in relationship to ageism. A valuable and important step is to understand the presence of ageing and older age how different types of online news media.

AIM

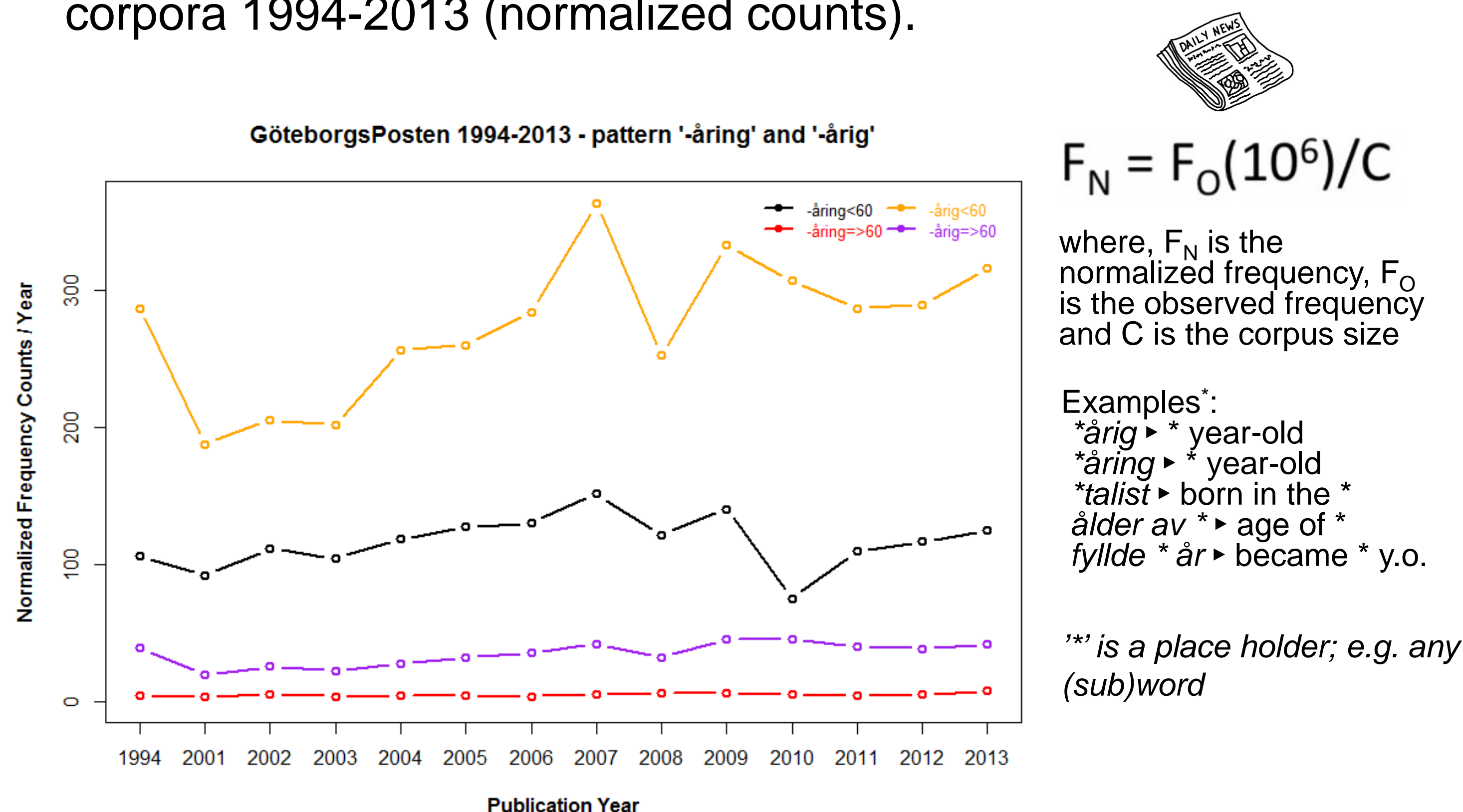
The main objective of this pilot work is to test, collate and produce evidence from Swedish news media representations of older ages and ageing.

Pilot study 1: "dynamic data"

Based on a snapshot of published online news 2015-2018, it's shown that **men** are starting to appear more often at the age of 24; while **women** already at the age of 20. Men are represented much longer in life than women. Women have a much more polarized representation - overrepresented in childbearing age, then completely erased after they turn 54. This method can be used to continuously monitor mentions of ageing in media.

Pilot study 2: "static data"

Pattern matching using regular expressions in newspaper corpora 1994-2013 (normalized counts).



METHOD(S)

Two pilot studies/experiments;

- (1) first names and their frequencies of the carriers' age according to Statistics Sweden (SCB) and their presence in online news.
- (2) using general pattern matching techniques with regular expressions and applying them to 13 issues (1994, 2001-13) of *Göteborgs-Posten* (Swedish news corpora).

Definition: Older persons ≥ 60 years. (25 % of the population in Sweden is over 60 years).

RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS

- Clear and consistent differences of how various age spans are represented in the news.
- 20-50 year olds is highly over represented compared with the Swedish population, while 0-24 and people over 54 are underrepresented, especially women.
- Pattern matching exhibits similar characteristics with the exception of obituaries where the elderly mentions are much more frequent.

Our pilot studies confirm the introspective view of underrepresentation of old age and older people in or trends can be revealed within a larger time span and synchronic media sources. More studies are required and in the near future we plan to improve, scale and apply our methodology on both synchronic and diachronic data using e.g. available text corpora and try to get a solid perspective on whether any differences or trends can be revealed within a larger time span

Take home message

Very clear patterns that strengthen the assumption that ageism is perpetuated in contemporary Swedish print and online news media. It also confirm gendered ageism in the media.

For additional information, please contact:
 Dimitrios Kokkinakis dimitrios.kokkinakis@gu.se
 Maria Edström maria.edstrom@gu.se
agecap.gu.se

