

Generations Review

The Newsletter of the British Society of Gerontology



British Society of
Gerontology

News and Reviews

Message From the President

Robin Means

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Exciting Changes for Generations Review

Generations Review (GR) is now an established and very well regarded part of the BSG 'offer' to members. In recent years it has continued to develop and evolve under the editorial guidance of teams from first Reading and then the Brunel. GR has been very lucky to have such committed editors as Wendy Martin and then more recently Mary Pat Sullivan. However, Mary Pat and the Brunel team have decided to step down at the end of this calendar year and this has encouraged a fresh look at how best to support the next stage of development of GR.

The objectives of GR are to:

- Keep members up-to-date and to report on major activities of the Society and our members;
- Promote BSG externally;
- Provide an outlet for policy and practice commentaries and share research progress; and
- Offer an alternative outlet for research findings to the peer reviewed academic journal.

The BSG Executive do not see these as changing in the short to medium term but they do see a need to better integrate how these objectives are also being partially met on our web site including through social media initiatives such as the Ageing Issues blog and the BSG Twitter and LinkedIn options. For example we need to become slicker at ensuring an article in GR automatically spins into opening an Ageing Issues blog as well as an alert on Twitter. We have also decided that this is a good moment to separate out editorial oversight from the process of putting together the actual copy prior to circulation to members. From January 2014, Rachel Hazelwood (BSG Administrator) will work closely with the editor, collating and copy editing the articles; as well as laying out the text and images and linking the content with the BSG's social media outlets.



Robin Means at the International Association of Gerontology and Geriatrics World Congress in Seoul, South Korea, June 2013

The Editor of *Generations Review* is a hugely important role for the BSG, particularly as the Society's profile increases and we look to the strategic development of our organisation. We will be advertising the role in the next few weeks and seeking to find someone who with a passion for linking up print and social media for maximum affect and who is committed to BSG as an organisation. The chosen person would be a co-opted member of the Publications Group if not an Executive member.

Finally I would like to thank Wendy and Mary Pat for their fantastic contribution to GR in recent years.



Not a member?

<http://www.britishgerontology.org>

Want to know more about this year's Conference?

<http://www.ageing.ox.ac.uk/bsg>

GENERATIONS REVIEW

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A Report from the Honorary Secretary

Sue Venn

With the Annual Conference, and with it the Annual General Meeting, fast approaching, I find myself reflecting on how much we have achieved during the last year and so I would like to start by thanking my fellow Committee Members for all their support and hard work and as always, a special thank you to Rachel. One of the many things Rachel has been doing is compiling an Executive Committee Handbook, which as well as being useful for current and new members of the committee, will also contribute to the archives of the BSG. Next year she will begin work on a version of the handbook for Members which will be available as a PDF from the Members' Area of the website.

This year, as you will know, the 42nd Annual Conference is being hosted by the Oxford Institute of Population Ageing. The Conference team are working hard to make this an exciting and full conference. It is a real credit to the team at Oxford that they have been able to respond to the enormous interest generated by booking more rooms, and even offering an extra conference dinner! We are all looking forward very much to the conference on 11-13 September 2013. We are also looking forward to the ERA Pre-Conference Meeting on Tuesday 10th September, 'Gerontology 2013: Challenging Futures', please visit the website for further information about this event: http://www.ageing.ox.ac.uk/bsg/era_meeting

This year, we have sought only one nomination to the Executive Committee, that of Treasurer-Elect. The outcome of the nominations will be announced at the 42nd Annual General Meeting of the society on Thursday 12th September at 5:30 pm. Please do make a note of the date of the AGM in your diary, and come along. We welcome feedback from members about all aspects of the Society's work and look forward to seeing as many of you as possible.



Sue Venn
Secretary

We were delighted that there has been so much interest from those requesting bursaries to attend this year's conference in Oxford, even though it meant we had to make some difficult decisions in terms of allocating funds. In the end, we were delighted to award 19 bursaries in total, 10 for attending the whole conference and a further nine for attending as a day delegate.

In view of the demands for us all to engage with social media, we have also been working to raise the profile of the BSG in that area. Alongside taking a fresh look at the website, the Social Media and Communications strategy group have been expanding our use of Twitter (follow us on [@britgerontology](https://twitter.com/britgerontology)), created an 'Ageing Issues' blog (<http://ageingissues.wordpress.com/>),

a LinkedIn group, and have plans to create podcasts on YouTube. As Rachel has excellent experience in media and communications, she is taking over as Chair of the Social Media group from me. We hope you will agree that we are definitely moving with the times, and this is an exciting era of development for the BSG.

On a further note concerning roles, and in order for Mary Pat Sullivan to complete her strategy goals within the Publications Group, I will be continuing as Secretary for a further year, and Mary Pat will therefore be taking over as Honorary Secretary at the AGM at Southampton in September 2014.

This change now leads me on to a further change that will be putting to members at the AGM in terms of how best to serve the BSG membership as a whole and for the efficient functioning of the Committee. Full details will be circulated with the AGM committee papers, but in summary, we are proposing that Officers' roles will change from the current structure of two years as Elect, two years in Office, and two years as Past, to one year Elect, three years in Office and one year as Past. Please do read the papers relating to this change when they are circulated with the AGM papers and contact me if you have any questions s.venn@surrey.ac.uk.

It's time again to remind everyone about the deadline for applying for a BSG Averil Osborn Award. The closing date for applications for 2014 is Thursday 31st October 2013, but please do feel free to contact me if you are thinking of applying, or pass on details to anyone you think might benefit from such an award. Further information is available at <http://www.britishgerontology.org/about-bsg/averil-osborn-fund.html>



Members win poster prize at the IAGG World Congress
L-R Angie Dickinson, University of Hertfordshire, Christina Victor, Brunel University and Deborah Humphrey, Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust

Emerging Researchers in Ageing Past, Present and Future

Naomi Woodspring and Deborah Cairns

A Proposal: Some of the most helpful moments along my PhD journey have come from formal and informal mentoring conversations. In no way is this statement meant to imply that my supervisors are not excellent. Instead it is the additional perspective, as an outsider – someone apart from my individual PhD process.

Capacity building is a phrase we use often when thinking about the usefulness of ERA in the bigger picture. Building capacity in the profession through creating a loose community of gerontologists who have a shared history, through ERA. We are familiar with each other's work and, to some extent, capabilities and interests. This kind of capacity building makes it possible for the Society and the larger profession to stay fresh and continue to grow, in both knowledge and interest bases. The workshops and conferences ERA presents also give its members and other participants an opportunity to explore areas that may not be presented to them through any other forum on their academic journey and early postdoc years.

The creation of an ERA mentoring program is another avenue that could build capacity within BSG, ERA, and the multiple aspects of the gerontological profession. I hear the groans now of, *"That's all well and good but who's going to find the time to do it. I've got more than enough on my plate now."* Very true. However, it is possible to build a mentoring model that could be useful to early researchers and take a minimal amount of time from mentors. The Gerontology Society of America is piloting a mentoring program that asks for only small increments of the mentors' time and, for me, has been invaluable. Below is a design for a proposed pilot project:

- i. BSG members who agreed to be part of the pilot project would provide either fifteen minute or half-hour mentoring sessions;
- ii. This could be a one-off, or if agreed by the mentor, additional sessions could be scheduled;
- iii. Volunteer mentors would be recruited from the BSG membership. BSG volunteer mentors would define the areas they would be willing to consult on, which would include professional development; and
- iv. Contact and scheduling would occur directly between the prospective mentor and mentee.

Please, if you are a BSG and/or ERA member, let me know what you think of this proposal. Could it be useful to you? Comments/thoughts from BSG members?

Email your thoughts to naomi.woodspring@uwe.ac.uk.

ESRC Impact Prize for Alan Walker

Sheila Peace, The Open University

"Good news for ageing research, Alan Walker wins the first ever Impact Champion of the Year Award bringing the value of public engagement with our multidisciplinary field centre stage"

(Sheila Peace, May 14th 2013)



Sheila Peace and Alan Walker

For the first time the ESRC have decided to award an annual prize to recognise and reward the successes of ESRC-funded researchers who they feel that achieved outstanding economic or societal impacts. The prize celebrates success in collaborative

working, partnerships, engagement and knowledge exchange activities that have led to significant impact.

At the awards ceremony Broadcaster Ewan Davies managed the presentations and a short 5 minute video relating to each winner was shown. The piece regarding Alan spoke of his significant track record in knowledge exchange, and supporting and enabling impact particularly through funded research programme. In talking about the NDA reference was made by Dr. Andrew Newman, Newcastle University to his work on 'Contemporary visual art and identity construction – wellbeing amongst older people' as an example showing the breadth of impact from the programme.

Nominations were requested by ESRC and 68 teams/people applied. The judging panel were:

- David Walker, writer and broadcaster specialising in public policy and management. Chair of the Celebrating Impact Prize panel and member of the ESRC Council.
- Fiona Armstrong, Deputy Director of Policy, resources and Communications, ESRC.
- Neil Serougi, independent health informatics research and policy consultant. Member of the Methods and Infrastructure Committee, ESRC.
- Clare Wallace, Professor of Sociology and Vice-Principal for Research and Knowledge Exchange at University of Aberdeen, member of the ESRC Research Committee.
- Graeme Nicol, SME Consultant and former ESRC Research Council member.
- Karen Bultitude, Lecturer in Science Communication and Director of Research in the Department of Science and Technology Studies in UCL.

A prize of £10,000 is awarded to the winners of each entry and £10,000 to the department with the Impact Champion of the Year, with second prizes of £5000 for each runner up. The prize is to be spent on furthering knowledge, public

engagement or other communications activities to promote the economic and social impact of research.



Alan Walker and Mary Gilhooly

The awards were for:

- Outstanding Impact in Society
- Outstanding International Impact
- Outstanding Impact in Public Policy
- Outstanding Impact in Business
- Outstanding Early Career Impact
- Impact Champion of the Year

and names of the recipients plus all the details can be found at: <http://www.esrc.ac.uk/news-and-events/press-releases/26059/researchers-celebrated-for-outstanding-impact.aspx>).

BSG Annual Conference 2013

11-13 September 2013
Oxford

The **Oxford Institute of Population Ageing** will be hosting the **British Society of Gerontology's 42nd Annual Conference**.



For more information visit:
www.ageing.ox.ac.uk/bsg

Judith Phillips, BSG Past President, Awarded OBE for Services to Older People

The British Society of Gerontology is delighted to announce that Professor Judith Phillips, Swansea University, has been awarded the Order of the British Empire for services to older people in the Queen's Birthday Honours List.

Judith sat on the BSG Executive Committee for many years and served as President from 2008-2010. At a critical time Judith led the Society in developing our strategic priorities. These have led to, among others, a growth in membership, our new website and the establishment of partnerships with other key organisations. These and other initiatives have increased the visibility of BSG in the UK and also in the international policy and research communities.



Judith is currently Director of the Older People and Ageing Research and Development Network in Wales and the Director of the Research Institute for Applied Social Sciences at Swansea University. She is a qualified social worker and worked in statutory residential and field settings, specialising in work with older adults.

The Society congratulates Judith on this prestigious honour!



Bernadette Bartlam, Keele University, and
Judith at the IAGG World Congress

Report on ILC-UK Event - Personal Care Savings Bonds

Felicity Jowitt, Brunel University

Personal Care Savings Bonds - a new way of saving towards social care in later life. A free International Longevity Centre presentation and discussion was held at the House of Lords on 10th June 2013. During the event, the development of a whole new financial savings product called Personal Care Savings Bonds (PCSBs) was presented and discussed, which, it was suggested, could help ease the social care funding crisis facing the UK.

The event was chaired by Baroness Greengross who introduced the presentation. She said that from focus groups, people think that they will die sooner than they actually do and that they think that they will not need care, although their parents do. So there has to be a way to attract people to save for their future care.

Professor Les Mayhew started his presentation by outlining the predicted demographics of older people in the UK. He said that the modal age of death is now 89 years, 10 more than in 1950; this will rise to 93 years by 2030 for both genders. ONS estimates the population aged 75+ will double from 5m to 11m by 2050 and the number aged 85+ will go from 1.5m to over 5m and the years spent in disability at the end of life is increasing with obvious financial and other consequences.

Professor Mayhew described how the PCSBs work. Each bond has a nominal value assumed to be £1 and is entered into a monthly prize draw; prize winners are individual bond holders who can elect to receive the money or re-invest it in more bonds thus increasing their personal fund. Bond values, both the prize element and accumulated value, will be tax free. PCSBs will normally be purchased out of taxed income, unlike personal pensions, though similar to Premium Bonds and lottery tickets. They would be purchasable over the internet, by standing order, and from local post offices and/or shops. Cash can only be withdrawn from deposits on being assessed as needing social care or on death. This means that the chance of winning a prize would increase with age as long as their fund accumulated in line with the total fund, and would reach a maximum value at the point of needing care or at the point of death. It follows that the longer a person lives without triggering social care, the larger the fund will be when it is required. For example a person aged 90 would be up to 162 times more likely to win a prize than an 18 year old (assuming they saved regularly). For those who die before triggering a social care assessment, the value of the accumulated fund would transfer to a person's estate to be inherited by persons or others of the deceased person's choice. This addresses one of the perceived problems of insurance for long-term care in which prospective policyholders may be concerned that they will not receive a benefit due to the small print in the policy. With PCSBs, even if they do not receive a payment for care, their estate will get the benefit. In some cases bond values on death could be used to pay for funeral costs replacing some public expenditure that would have incurred under the Social Fund. This would represent a small but useful saving on welfare ex-

penditure and would provide cheap form of funeral insurance for people who would not usually buy these products. The research shows that once fully mature the fund could be worth as much as £80bn and make an annual contribution to the UK care economy of over £2.5bn annually. Annual prize money would be worth around £700m.

Professor Mayhew discussed what the fund could be used for, either for preventative assistive technology such as fitting a shower, or for social care. From a financial perspective he said that the fund should not be included in the means test, you could gift bonds and that the bonds could be popular with many classes of people. A representative from the premium bonds said that there would need to be legislation for the bonds to be tax free and the scheme would need to start big to pay for the big prizes suggested. There would also need to be lots of smaller prizes.

Comments from the floor included:

- A premium bond type organisation should run the scheme to give people confidence that it would not go bust like "Equitable Life".
- A benefit of the scheme is that it would be a worthy, dull and safe way to save to cover care costs.
- The fund could be invested in care schemes.
- There is no research on who buys lottery tickets and premium bonds.
- People in the working class and lower middle class brackets might find the scheme most attractive.

The most commented on subject of the discussion was what the trigger should be for accessing the fund, perhaps attendance allowance, to boost a personal allowance, signature from a GP, universal portable assessment, or personal decision.

The proposal for the new bond is contained in a discussion paper co-authored by Professor Les Mayhew and Dr. David Smith of Cass Business School, part of City University London, in partnership with the International Longevity Centre - UK (ILC-UK). Downloadable at file:

///C:/DOCUME~1/IBSRFA~1.000/LOCALS~1/Temp/Personal_Care_Savings_Bonds.pdf



Who's Who

Rachel Hazelwood

Administrator
British Society of Gerontology

Describe yourself in three words.

Reliable. Enthusiastic. Curious.

How did you get here today (i.e. career/research)?

My degree is in English and History; my background is media (ITV) – neither of which bears much relation to what I do now! After starting a family I decided that I wanted to spend more time at home and so I started looking for a part time role. I happened to be chatting to an old friend from SPRU at York University who said she'd seen an advert for a job that would be the perfect fit... 6 years later and it's still the perfect fit!

What's the best piece of advice you've received?

"If you say you're going to do something, then do it today. Not tomorrow, or next week or some time, do it now." Procrastination is the thief of time. When juggling a career with family life and other commitments, it's so important to get on with things rather than putting them off – it's a guaranteed route to stress otherwise!

Who's the most influential person in your life and why?

Probably my grandmother, Lillian. She's an extraordinary woman and my favourite person to spend time with. She's 92 this year and as elegant, erudite and loving as she ever was. She taught me how to cook, how to sew, encouraged my love of reading and history and reminds me on a regular basis to stop dashing around, take a deep breath and appreciate the life I have.

What's the best book you've ever read?

I've had sleepless nights over this question! There are too many to choose from as it so often depends on my mood. Jane Eyre and I Capture the Castle from my childhood; Cloud Atlas for being ground breaking; The Song of Achilles for the sheer quality of the writing; Wolf Hall for too many reasons... Then again I've just finished Life after Life by Kate Atkinson which I loved (although I'm looking forward to debating the ending with some of my BSG colleagues). Perhaps it's easier to answer what's the worst book I've ever read. That I can do. Fifty. Shades. Of. Awfulness. I only got 50 pages in before I threw it across the room.

What do you do when you are not doing Society work?

I spend most of my time being a mum to two wonderful girls, Molly 11 and Nell 7. They keep me busy, amused and frus-

trated in equal measures! If I do manage to snatch time between work and motherhood, my favourite ways to relax include cooking, crafts (knitting, crochet, sewing); reading and on the rare occasion we manage to get a babysitter, going to the cinema.



What's important for the future of the British Society of Gerontology?

Social Media. It really is going to be vital to the future of the society in so many ways. Social Media can capture, highlight and promote everything the BSG stands for but most importantly it can make us more visible to the outside world and draw attention to the work and achievements of our members. I'm not a gerontologist, I'm not even an academic – but I can see how vital it is that we showcase our members work in order to engage people in the debate about how we treat our ageing population. You'll be hearing a lot more from me about social media in the months ahead



Follow us on Twitter:
#BritGerontology

Cutting Edge

Below the Surface: Managing the Life of Collaborative Research Projects

Jacquie Eales, University of Alberta
Robin Means, University of the West of England
Norah Keating, University of Alberta

Introduction

In the last issue of *Generations Review*, we described a trans-national interdisciplinary research project on the joys and challenges of collaborative research and explored how these play out when establishing projects. This second in our series of three articles focuses on managing the life of such projects. Data were generated through a semi structured group interview with ten team members from the UK and Canada. Axial coding (Walker and Myrick, 2006) was used to capture themes within each phase. Four key factors influenced the on-going life of projects and how smoothly they operated: governance, understanding stakeholders, dealing with personalities and communicating.

Governance

Collaborative, interdisciplinary research ventures often are complex and large-scale. Respondents recognized that projects required clear management structures and operational guidelines. However, some respondents had experienced such arrangements as excessively bureaucratic, time consuming and more reflective of power differentials than structures meant to facilitate the effective running of projects.

"We're forever filling project templates, so I would definitely be very wary about getting involved within such a big project again...it's not worth the cost in terms of resources. I imagined to spend 10% of my time on this project and it's costing me 20-25% of my time, a lot of it basically doing project administration and I'm probably not addressing the things I ought to be addressing as a result." (John)

Some of the more senior participants had experience with a range of management structures and believed that a critical factor was the willingness of collaborators to make them work.

"...a non-hierarchical approach to doing research. There is none of this 'I'm a senior researcher, so I'm in charge and you're my lackey for my project' ...it's just what do you have to contribute and it's valued and we're open to it and we want to hear it". (Tracy)

"In big projects we've done... we've had

kind of a management team.... made up of members of the constituencies of the big collaboration..... I do think those are important, but I think if there is no will to make it work, it doesn't matter what your structures are." (Alexis)

Indeed, respondents were able to give examples where collaborative structures were undermined by 'silo' thinking and "broke down because there was no willingness to look across." (Victoria).

Having adequate resources, including personnel to handle the administrative and governance aspects of large-scale collaborative research endeavours freed researchers, to focus on their research investigations. As one researcher commented, "I don't think we could have achieved that without an administrator to do a lot of this stuff that wasn't research." (Mary)

Understanding stakeholders

Understanding and dealing with the views of different project stakeholders was seen as critical.

"We won the project at which point they [the voluntary body] saw it as the opportunity to then ignore what the project was and to do something they wanted to do because they saw research as advocacy." (Shannon)

"You are coming at the research from very different worlds and it's not just a language issue, but there's differences in what it means and what you can do." (Anna)

Such differences were couched primarily in terms of tensions between academic and non-academic partners. However, several examples also were offered of difficulties that emerged among academic collaborators from different disciplines.

"It became very apparent at one meeting early on, that the kind of research that I do... was really not valued." (Anna)

"There is a tendency for what I call the supremacy of natural science. In other words, natural sciences positivist based approach to the world tends to be questioned less than social science, which is more contested and people have different views." (Shannon)

These challenges were more likely to be overcome when adequate time was spent addressing the interests and needs of different partners.

"Open communication to discuss what stakeholder's wanted and what researchers can provide early in the process, may mitigate some of the issues later rather than getting to the end and say 'okay, well this is what we want and this is what we can give you' and there not being a connection." (Emily)

"It [large evaluation project] had a lot of potential for going badly wrong and I think it didn't because of trying to work really hard at working out what people really needed." (Clark)

Dealing with personalities

Participants related varied experiences in working with other people. Team experiences fraught with interpersonal troubles seemed to have an environment that was individualistic, competitive or intolerant of differences. Some participants believed that they were not being respected or valued; their comments were not taken into account or were marginalized.

"Lack of respect for the work of others....The team never coalesced." (Anna)
"She got extremely upset that we wouldn't accept her point of view...to the extent that she left the room and wouldn't engage in a discussion." (Mary)

In contrast, having a milieu that was open, respectful and trusting allowed members the freedom to disagree.

"We knew we had differences of opinion, but that we could be quite open with each other about that. That worked out really well. We talked about openness, but I think there is... a sense of vulnerability too." (Michelle)

"It was being able to acknowledge as well that you are not an expert in everything... Being able to feel quite comfortable doing that [asking for clarification], meant that we could then really learn off each other" (Mary)

Addressing power differentials was seen as critical, especially for early career researchers to believe they have a voice on the project.

"We thought very carefully about student involvement, and were students kind of sitting at the feet of the mentors or were they real collaborators on this project and we tried to do the latter throughout." (Alexis)

"It was sort of 'I do know something, I'm not the expert, but they want to hear what I

know' so that helped me more." (Tracy)

Communicating

Participants agreed that communication was fundamental to the on-going management of interdisciplinary research collaborations.

"Communication lines I think are just absolutely key. Without it we would not be where we're at in terms of the success of the collaboration". (Anna)

"We tend to just go right to the task so bringing it to a process discussion, e.g. How are things going? What's this tension all about? Sometimes I think if there really is a will to work together [we] can resolve things before they get too deep." (Alexis)

Opportunities to meet face-to-face often were seen as foundational in establishing interpersonal, respectful relationships and building common ground.

"In that particular group, part of that freedom to argue and disagree with each other I think was achieved through good food, lots of wine, nice special occasions, and I'm serious, the opportunity to relax and in different countries as well, really created that sense of being a group, being able to have that freedom to express what we thought." (Mary)

"It helps to build those foundations for relationships to take place, so that when you are sending email communications, you understand where a person's coming from. You can understand their whole life, not just their academic life and how this might fit in." (Victoria)

There was a consensus that "it was hard to stay connected" (Michelle), but with the groundwork laid in person, people continued to foster relations through other means of telecommunications, such as "being able to send emails, get very quick responses, picking up the phones" (Anna) and "regular teleconferences just to stay in touch" (Michelle).

These types of communication became easier to use once relationships had been established through the earlier investment in face-to-face meetings.

For others, their experiences of interdisciplinary collaboration were tainted by poor communication. Electronic mail in particular seemed susceptible to miscommunications.

"Again, and again being asked the same questions, we're realizing she's not reading

questions, we're realizing she's not reading my emails. Why am I even bothering responding because I'm not being heard?" (Anna)

Implications

Each collaborative project is a dynamic entity that needs to be viewed as a socio-political process that "may be more difficult, may require constant vigilance across efforts, and may at times be humbling" (Dodson *et al.*, 2010, p.1157). Several suggestions are offered for effectively managing this process:

- Develop fair and transparent governance structures. They provide a sense of order to large and often complex research ventures.
- Spend adequate time understanding the interests and addressing the needs of different stakeholders.
- Assess continually the quality of relationships among team members, particularly in situations where tension is present. Diverse teams often require more explicit attention to process (Hall *et al.*, 2005). It is important to invest time and resources in team building: attaching respect to relationships and valuing people and their ideas, precisely for their differences (Fairburn and Fulton, 2000).
- Communication is essential, particularly when teams are working across disciplines and distance. Despite the advances in communication technology, such mechanisms do not eliminate collaboration barriers (Cummings and Kiesler, 2005) and some individuals are not well-suited for collaborative research.

The final article in this mini-series will look at project outcomes as well as making some final comments about the challenges of collaborative research.

Acknowledgements

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Exploring Seoul, IAGG World Congress
L-R Khim Horton and Sarah Arber, University of
Surrey, Christina Victor, Brunel University



Simon Biggs, University of Melbourne, IAGG
World Congress

Retired Academics and Professional Continuity: A Cross Cultural Comparison

Tatiana Schifferle-Rowson
Keele University

Background

Ageing populations and the associated demographic changes have been raising a variety of socio-economic challenges for both developed and developing countries (WHO, 2002; Ghosh *et al.*, 2006; OECD, 2006; UN, 2010; Beard *et al.*, 2012). As a consequence, many countries are re-evaluating the place of older people in society and are adopting measures to encourage active ageing (OECD, 2011). While for developed nations, such as the UK, population ageing started in the 19th century, for developing countries, such as Brazil, this is a more recent phenomenon. In the cases of Brazil and the UK the proportion of older people in the population will reach similar levels by 2050. This means that Brazil will have much less time to formulate a solution for demographic change when compared to the UK (UN, 2010; Beard *et al.*, 2012). Active ageing and extending working life have been suggested as ways to manage the 'cost' of an ageing population (WHO, 2002; Vickerstaff, 2010). In recent years, retirement policies in the UK and Brazil, in different ways, have been changing in order to make the welfare system more financially sustainable (Vickerstaff *et al.*, 2008; MPS, 2009; Taylor, 2010; Amaro, 2011).

In this context, it is relevant to study the retirement patterns of occupational groups where their members hold specialised skills and knowledge and have the scope to remain active for longer. While less clear for other occupational groups, previous studies in the USA, UK and Brazil indicate that academics tend to continue to be engaged in academic-related activities in retirement (Dorfman, 1989; Tizard and Owen, 2001; Veiga *et al.*, 2007). Dorfman (1989) argues for the need for more cross-cultural research to understand further universal and specific patterns regarding the retirement of academics.

This study aims to compare the transition to retirement for academics in Brazil and the UK and their experiences of professional continuity thereafter, testing the validity of the Continuity Theory proposed by Atchley (1989). While there are marked differences between the academic contexts in these two countries (Schwartzman, 1998; Halsey, 2004; Mata, 2005; Colini, 2012), many similarities in the transition to retirement can be noted in the reviewed literature (Tizard and Owen, 2001; Veiga *et al.*, 2007). However, there is no study directly comparing the retirement of academics in the UK and Brazil. Studying the retirement of academics can inform universities about what retired academics want and provide help with retirement planning. It should also encourage research about retirement issues in relation to similar professional occupations.

Methodology

In this study, the focus has been on comparing Brazilian and UK academics with regard to three main topics: (1) retirement transition, including reasons to retire and adjustment to retire-

ment transition, including reasons to retire and adjustment to retirement, (2) continuities and discontinuities following retirement and (3) satisfaction in retirement.

In order to address the research questions raised a mixed methods approach, combining an on-line survey and in-depth narrative interviews, was used. The survey stage aimed to collect a hundred completed questionnaires: fifty in each country. In the interview stage twenty retired academics were interviewed in the UK and Brazil - ten from each country. The findings from the two stages were compared and contrasted providing a more comprehensive picture of the transition to retirement for UK and Brazilian academics.

Key Findings

For most of the Brazilian and UK academics studied, the decision to retire was due to a combination of reasons. Generally, the decision was associated with age and having reached a certain level of pension entitlement. A few Brazilian academics reported that they had retired solely due to the fact that they had reached the compulsory retirement age, their attitudes towards this practice was largely negative. In the transition to retirement, Brazilian and UK academics tended to be able to create a sense of gradual retirement either by moving to a part-time arrangement before retirement, mainly in the UK, or remaining engaged in academia following retirement. Most retired academics experienced a certain level of professional continuity. However, how the process of retirement is experienced and professional activity is continued varies from individual to individual, consistent with the idea of the individualisation of the retirement experience (Vickerstaff and Cox, 2005). It is clear that the process of retirement in the UK facilitated a greater range of alternatives when compared to that in Brazil.

Brazilian and UK academics expressed a desire for continuity, supporting the idea developed by Atchley (1989). For many, this continuity of professional work was not necessarily exercised through reemployment or paid work; some individuals were satisfied with volunteer positions or an occasional contribution, provided that it was recognised and valued by the institution. For most of the participants from both countries, retirement also led to a degree of discontinuity. Interestingly, in both countries, the amount of continuity sought was related to the individual's health status, age and period in retirement. Most of the academics studied reported that retirement was a satisfying stage of life, especially once a new routine was established. This sense of satisfaction was usually associated with a perception of financial stability and a greater autonomy regarding the use of their time and choice of activities. In addition to this, most retired academics commented that to be still engaged in academic-related activities was also a source of satisfaction.

The findings of this research suggest that universities should re-think the role of retired academics and be more transparent with regard to institutional policies for the retirement process and participation in academic life following retirement. In addition to this, academics should be encouraged to plan early for retirement, not only in terms of pension, but also on how

the transition to retirement should be structured, perhaps extending their working life by adopting more flexible working practices, and how their academic engagement could take place in retirement.

A conclusion from this study was that academics in Brazil and UK have similar expectations and experiences in their transition to retirement, regardless of their different national and cultural contexts. This may be an indication that the intrinsic motivation for continuing working beyond retirement is a feature of academics as an occupational group. Although this scope for extending working life found for academics cannot be said to be applicable to all occupational groups (see also Vickerstaff, 2010), there are other groups, especially for those people from professional backgrounds, which could be also investigated in terms of the degree of continuity exercised in retirement.

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Contributions to More Engaged Ageing: The Arts, Health and Wellbeing Mix

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I began writing this article just after completing a fairly complicated Moroccan orange cake recipe, and although delicious, several adjustments had to be made to get it right and even then the outcome was not assured. The balance of spices did not seem quite right, the recipe barely called for enough oranges and the stipulated blood orange variety was nowhere to be found on British shop shelves. And the use of polenta flour instead of the usual wheat, while creative, was not the tried and true path I was accustomed to when preparing dessert for a dinner party. Yes, that was another variable, how would the guests respond? And the oven, whilst high tech, eco and German, was untested with a polenta cake recipe so how could I be assured that the fan assist wouldn't burn the cake? Maybe I should have borrowed my neighbour's Aga, which she offered, but that seemed over the top at the time and well, sometimes, a little low level experimentation is just what one needs to stir the grey matter and stimulate the appetite.

Since the establishment of the first arts and health initiative,

Hospital Arts in 1974 by Peter Senior in Manchester, arts and health practitioners, clinicians, researchers and policy makers have been engaged in 'a little experimentation' over the course of the last 29 years. In 1988 Hospital Arts became Arts for Health and was formally integrated into Manchester Metropolitan University where it continues doing innovative work under the directorship of Clive Parkinson. Peter Senior and the UK gave birth to what is now known as the arts and health field, which has truly become international in scope (i). While it is beyond the capacity of this article to present a history of UK arts and health achievements and contributions (see Clift *et al.*, 2009; Royal Society for Public Health, 2013), the focus will be to discuss some of the impediments to arts and health research and to also look at some of the key practice ingredients, particularly those that are oriented toward older people, with the more recent addition of wellbeing being added into the mix. The arts in health cut across the spectrum and include performative, visual, written, and spoken forms whilst the venues range from individual homes to community centres, religious settings, pubs, museums/galleries, concert halls, outpatient clinics, hospitals and residential care. The different purposes of arts and health programmes also cover a wide range and include health promotion and education, direct intervention and improvement of the healthcare system (Camic, 2008). Among those 60 and older, arts and health initiatives are likely the best documented of any age group and include programmes and research focusing on participatory arts, heritage-based programmes and audience-related studies.

Going back for a moment to my thoughts about using my neighbour's Aga, which I fantasised to be the randomised control trial (RCT) of ovens, or staying with my German cooker, perhaps parallel to a small-scale quasi-experimental study, one needs to consider how the evidence base in arts and health research involving older adults has been shaped. Until very recently (e.g. 2010 in the UK and 2012 in the US) substantial national funding has not been allocated to study arts and health interventions among any age group. This is despite several smaller and intermediate-sized studies (e.g. Cohen *et al.*, 2006; Cohen, 2009) that offered increasing evidence for the value and importance of the arts and culture on emotion, cognitive functioning, mobility, social engagement, social inclusion, quality of life, wellbeing and yes, even longevity (e.g. Maduro, 1974; Wilkinson *et al.*, 2007; Rosenberg, 2009; Cuypers *et al.*, 2011; Eeckelaar *et al.*, 2012). Not unlike this author's initial suspicions about polenta as a substantial cake ingredient, it appears that national funding councils and many journal editors have had—and continue to harbour—suspicions against considering arts and health in any of its forms as worthy of funding or publishing without *proof* that they work. And it is the concept of proof, rather than that of *providing evidence*, which seems to be one of the core problems in how arts and health research is funded, evaluated and eventually published.

RCT studies in particular, operate covertly on the assumption that proof can be a discovered outcome of all interventions be

(i) As evidenced by the recent launch of two peer reviewed journals, *Arts & Health: An International Journal of Research, Policy and Practice* (2009) and *Applied Arts & Health* (2010).

they pharmaceutical, behavioural or surgical—on humans or on animals—in the laboratory, hospital or community. The assumption that proof can be or must be discoverable has curtailed the development of arts and health research, and restricted the advancement and support of evidence-based practice, by relying on this limited paradigm. Arts and health activities are complex activities involving multiple senses, actions, variables and constructs. Yet, to seek proof, for example, that the Alzheimer's Society 'Sing for Your Brain' groups help people to feel less socially isolated or that the long established 'Good Times: Art for Older People' at London's Dulwich Picture Gallery engage people cognitively and emotionally while stimulating creativity, overlooks the existing evidence that programmes such as these contribute to the health and wellbeing of older adults through multiple means and proof may be an elusive if not impossible concept.

This is not to suggest we forgo rigorous research and evaluation but it does suggest we should be looking for evidence rather than proof. Proof is best left for mathematics from which it came and for drug intervention studies (and even there other factors can influence a drug's effect). Involving the arts and culture in health and wellbeing for older people, and other age groups, requires that we look for multiple sources of evidence that go beyond what a main outcome variable from an RCT can tell us about how a particular programme or intervention is effective. While acknowledging the importance of RCTs in some circumstances, considering different questions that are better suited to the complexities of older adult health and wellbeing would allow one to draw upon other research designs including different quantitative, mixed-methods and qualitative approaches. Using the cake making metaphor, a layered approach that gathers substantial evidence from multiple sources, while addressing numerous interconnected questions, can provide potentially richer evidence of impact for practitioners and health commissioners.

There is a growing evidence base, however, that arts and health activities for older people can reduce social isolation, which is a factor in depression; can help increase social cohesion and intergenerational interaction (Cutler, 2009; Alcock *et al.*, 2011) and help both physical (i.e. through dance, singing) and mental wellbeing through stimulation, creativity and challenge. Although epidemiological research has demonstrated a link between attendance at cultural events and mortality some time ago (Bygren *et al.*, 1996), national health policy has only recently been encouraged to examine these factors in earnest (O'Neill, 2010). The first known arts, health and wellbeing RCT to receive national funding to study the impact of participative community singing programmes for older people reported consistently higher social, emotional and physical health benefits (Clift *et al.*, 2012). Previously, a pilot study for people with dementia (PWD) and their carers had shown group singing enhanced wellbeing for both PWD and carer and helped to encourage further engagement with community activities (Camic *et al.*, 2011). While quantitative measures did not detect change, qualitative analysis from carers and PWD provided encouraging evidence about the impact of group singing for this population.

Likewise, in a feasibility study that is currently being expand-

ed *et al.* (2012) discovered that viewing art in a gallery setting within small groups helped to increase episodic memory for PWD, while carers reported their family members had improved mood, confidence and reduced isolation. Other promising research in galleries and museums has supported the inclusion of people with middle to more advanced dementia for positive 'in the moment experiences' when viewing art (MacPherson *et al.*, 2009), while a recently completed study has expanded on this to include viewing and making art across contemporary and traditional gallery settings for PWD in the early to middle stages (Camic *et al.*, under review). These studies make use of the culture and health framework (Camic and Chatterjee, 2013) that partners cultural organisations, health and social care and local authorities to help develop arts, health and wellbeing programmes on a local level.

In conclusion, an increasing amount of research and even a far greater amount of practice involving arts, health and wellbeing is occurring across all age groups and for people with different health and social problems; this article has touched on just a very few. For older people, arts and health is certainly not a panacea or cure-all approach to sometimes complex problems but there is growing evidence available, internationally and in the UK, that arts and health approaches can address a range of issues successfully to the satisfaction *and pleasure* of many participants.

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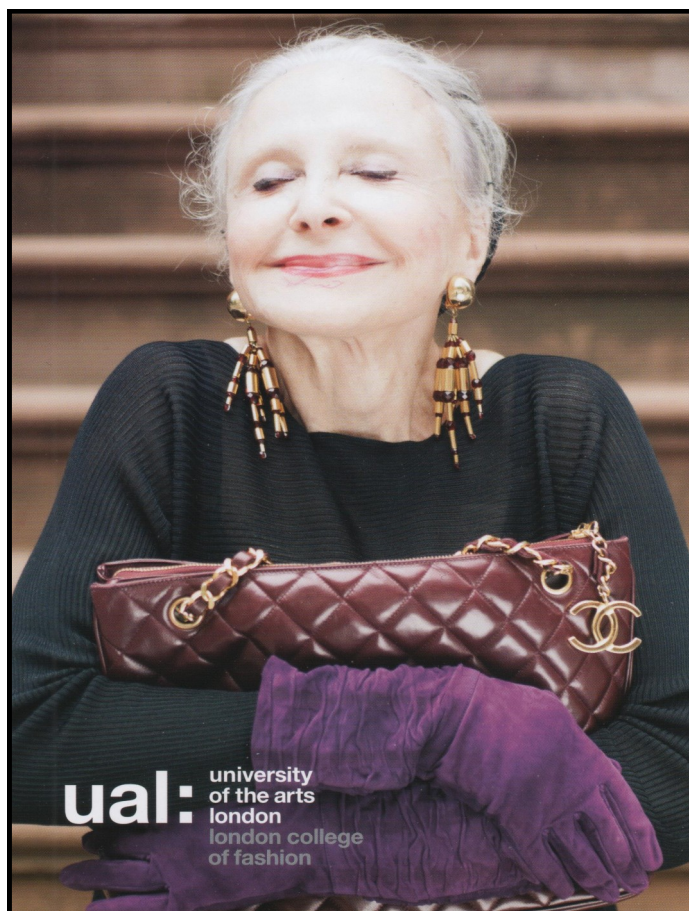
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Ageing Issues Blog:

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Mirror Mirror: Representations and reflections on age and ageing

University of the Arts London and London College of Fashion

This two-day event (29th - 30th October, 2013) is designed to provoke fresh perspectives on age and ageing in relation to culture and fashion. It will comprise traditional academic papers from scholars who have examined ageing and culture as well as interactive performance events, works of art designed by LCF students working in collaboration with older people and the screening of films about later life.

It will be a cross-disciplinary, critical investigation of the multiple experiences of age and ageing through the lens of the humanities and the arts. A central aim of the event will be to investigate and interrogate cultural articulations of ageing and old age. The category 'age' will be re-considered, as will the categories 'fashion' and 'beauty'. The keynote speakers (30th October) include Margaret Morganroth Gullette and Professor Julia Twigg. The New York blogger Ari Seth Cohen (Advanced Style) and UK blogger Alyson (That's not my age) will also be talking. The ticket price includes drinks on the evening of the 29th October and lunch on the 30th October.

For more information: <http://newsevents.arts.ac.uk/event/mirror-mirror-representations-and-reflections-on-age-and-ageing/>