

CONTEXT-SPECIFIC GERONTOLOGY IN GERONTOLOGICAL EDUCATION: SOME REFLECTIONS ON DECOLONIZING THE FIELD

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DOING GERONTOLOGY IN THE GLOBAL SOUTH

Addressing the “problem of aging” narrative (Cohen, 1992)

“Data rich, theory poor” (Birren & Bengtson, 1988)

Harnessing the cultural turn in gerontology (Twigg & Martin, 2014)

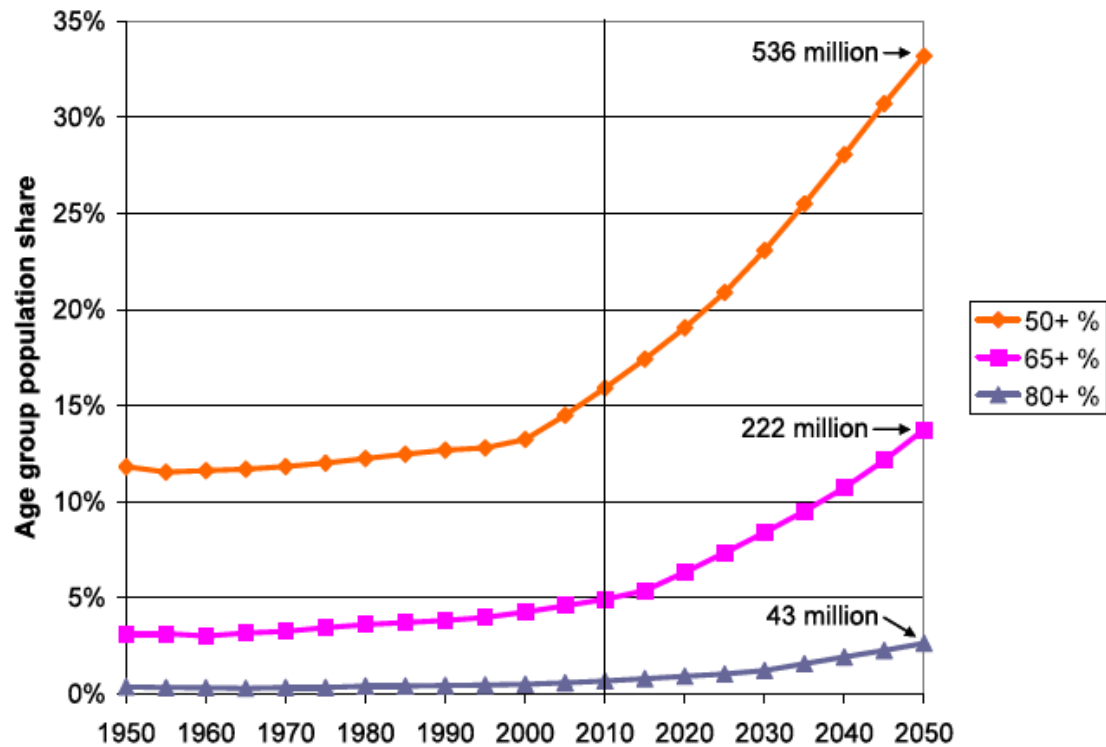
Euro-American centric models and paradigms (“empirical governmentality”)



“A moral parable of development and its discontents...”

Sivaramamkrishnan (2018). *As the World Ages: Rethinking a Demographic Crisis*. Harvard University Press

AGING IN INDIA: THE “PROBLEM” NARRATIVE



The other side of the Demographic Dividend: aging of India's population

57 million (1991) to 104 million (2011), Census 2011 (projected to be 323 million by 2050)

6.6% (1991) to 8.6% (2011) (20% by 2050)

With the breakdown of joint family structures, urbanization, limited security provisions, increasing burden of non-communicable diseases (NCDs)

GERONTOLOGICAL EDUCATION IN INDIA

HIGHER EDUCATION IN GERONTOLOGY

Molecular Biology of Aging
Geriatrics and Nursing
Paramedical Training
Social Policy

KEY RESEARCH AREAS

Social determinants of health
Nutritional status
Poverty estimates
Anthropometry and psychological morbidity
Large-scale data sets: e.g. *Longitudinal Aging Study in India (LASI)*

Figure 1 Research Output in Different Areas of Aging

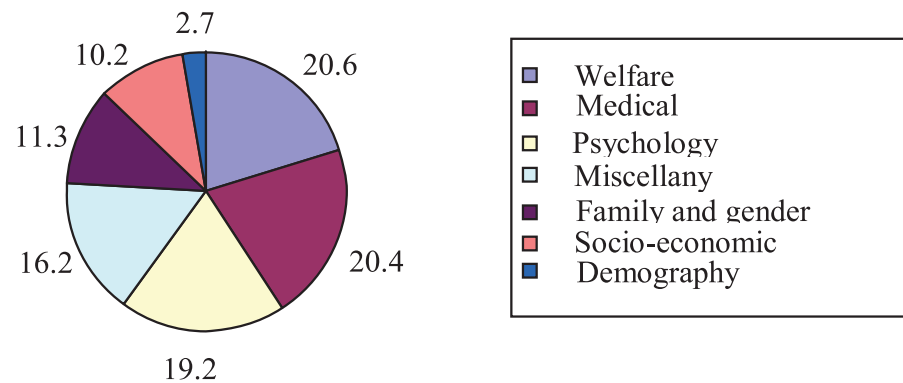


Figure 1. Research output in different areas of aging. Source: Ramamurti and Jamuna (2010b).

➤ older lives are perceived in the **language of dependence, senility and affliction that necessitate measurement and control**



Certificate Course in
**Integrated Geriatric Care
(CCIGC)**



THE PROMISE OF CRITICAL GERONTOLOGY

Contextualization as an analytical tool

- Extended critical gerontological framework (Luborsky & Sankar, 1993):
 - one that examines the cultural contexts of the conduct of contemporary gerontology, and the other examines the nature of *contextualization itself*
- Harnessing the link between critical gerontology and feminism (Formosa, 2005); Education as a route to cultural freedom (Freire, 1985)
- Movement away from a functionalist, problem-solving approach towards a political commitment

“Culture is not a frozen set of rules that people merely enact. Nor do all peoples in a culture abide by the same cultural principles or concepts: the activity of people is heterogeneous, contentious, emotionally charged, and often surprising...in other words, culture *is* as culture *does*”

Mines, D & S. Lamb (2010). *Everyday Life in South Asia*. Indiana University Press

HOW DO WE PRODUCE A DECENTERED, CULTURALLY-INSPIRED GERONTOLOGICAL TRADITION?

How do we reclaim the postreform, neoliberal University in the Global South?

“Posing the right questions for each *context* is itself part of the work of intellectual decolonization” (Gopal, 2021)

- Anticolonial University (instead of decolonization)
- *“anti-colonial practice invokes a critical and radical spirit of enquiry and action rather than a singular state to be feasibly arrived at within the modest-and inevitably compromised-parameters of the university”*

Moving beyond the binaries of Global South-North/High-Income-Low/Income countries and paying attention to local hierarchies (e.g. role of caste in sustaining political colonialism)

BMJ Global Health

Editorial

Is decolonisation sufficient? 

 Sana Qais Contractor^{1, 2, 3},  Jashodhara Dasgupta⁴

FINAL THOUGHTS

Staying away from an “alternative” discourse: Rather, a plural discourse- not alternative, not derivative

a confident foraging of indigenous knowledge systems

Local voices, local epistemes need to challenge the complex caste-class nexus in generating inclusive gerontological traditions