Living Longer: Opportunities for Social Work Research

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Marcie Pitt-Catsoupes & Nancy Morrow-Howell
THE SOCIAL AND BEHAVIORAL IMPORTANCE OF LONGEVITY
LONGEVITY RULES
Two-thirds of all people who have reached age 65 are alive today.
Let’s begin with

FOUR POINTS
Longevity is a GAME CHANGER
WHAT WOULD YOU DO IF YOU KNEW YOU ONLY HAD 5 MORE YEARS TO LIVE?
WHAT WOULD YOU DO IF YOU WOULD LIVE FOR 20?
Aging is relevant to everyone.
what we do

EARLY IN LIFE

impacts our lives

LATER IN LIFE
it's NOT ALL DEMOGRAPHICS
A structural lag exists between needs and institutions.
Life expectancy at ages 65 and 85, by sex, selected years 1900–2009

NOTE: The life expectancies (LEs) for decennial years 1910 to 1990 are based on decennial census data and deaths for a 3-year period around the census year. The LEs for decennial year 1900 are based on deaths from 1900 to 1902. LEs for years prior to 1930 are based on the death registration area only. The death registration area increased from 10 states and the District of Columbia in 1900 to the coterminous United States in 1933. LEs for 2000–2006 are based on a newly revised methodology that uses vital statistics death rates for ages under 66 and modeled probabilities of death for ages 66 to 100 based on blended vital statistics and Medicare probabilities of dying and may differ from figures previously published.

Reference population: These data refer to the resident population.

SOURCE: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics, National Vital Statistics System.
Let’s consider **FOUR MYTHS**

"Aging research is **just about the old.**"

"Growing older is **totally negative.**"

"Age is **Uni-dimensional.**"

"Older adults are **done.**"
AGING RESEARCH IS (NOT) JUST ABOUT OLDER PERSONS
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Figure 40. Chronic disease death rates by race in St. Louis County and St. Louis City in 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disease</th>
<th>Whites</th>
<th>African Americans</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Heart Disease</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>256</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cancer</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>216</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stroke</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diabetes</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: MODHSS, Chronic Disease MICA

Notes: Rates are per 100,000 and age adjusted using 2000 standard population; stroke: cerebrovascular disease
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https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qMQ42LPznj4
AGING RESEARCH IS (NOT) JUST ABOUT OLDER PERSONS
AGING IS (NOT) UNI-DIMENSIONAL
Age when men become 'old'?
Age when women become 'old'?

AGING IS (NOT) UNI-DIMENSIONAL
AGING IS (NOT) UNI-DIMENSIONAL

WHAT IMAGES COME TO MIND?
AGING IS (NOT) UNIDIMENSIONAL

WHAT IMAGES COME TO MIND?
AGING IS (NOT) UNI-DIMENSIONAL
What is less widely understood is that this is happening at a time when both individual life cycles and populations have taken on **radically different structures**. We have not added decades to life expectancy by simply extending old age; instead, we have **opened up a new space partway through the life course, a second and different kind of adulthood that precedes old age.**

GROWING OLDER IS (NOT) TOTALLY NEGATIVE
3 GROWING OLDER IS (NOT) TOTALLY NEGATIVE

COSTLY
CRABBY
can't adapt to new technology
DECLINE
SLOW
OUT OF TOUCH
Disinterested
not qualified
set in their ways
in training
retired

DEMENTED
difficult to change behavior
slow learners
unmotivated

FORGETFUL
Not open-minded
less potential

GROWING OLDER IS (NOT) TOTALLY NEGATIVE
OLDER ADULTS ARE (NOT) “DONE”
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Today’s older workers (particularly those aged 50 and older) plan to work past the conventional retirement age.

Older workers give many reasons for continued work: health & wealth; meaning & connection

Source: AARP, 2013
OLDER ADULTS ARE (NOT) “DONE”

Figure 2: Perceived Likelihood of Age Discrimination by HR Managers at Stages of Employment Cycle

Source: Adapted with permission from Parry, 2006, of the Cranfield School of Management.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Overall</th>
<th>Men 50+</th>
<th>Women 50+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wellness, Health &amp; Safety Protections</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunities for Meaningful Work</td>
<td>33.4</td>
<td>27.5</td>
<td>26.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workplace Flexibility, Autonomy &amp; Control</td>
<td>27.6</td>
<td>19.0</td>
<td>23.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provisions for Employment Security &amp; Predictabilities</td>
<td>48.4</td>
<td>47.8</td>
<td>61.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotion of Constructive Relationships at the Workplace</td>
<td>18.1</td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td>11.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunities for Development, Learning &amp; Advancement</td>
<td>42.9</td>
<td>41.8</td>
<td>42.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture of Respect, Inclusion &amp; Equity</td>
<td>-2.6</td>
<td>-10.5</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fair, Attractive, &amp; Competitive Compensation &amp; Benefits</td>
<td>27.0</td>
<td>15.7</td>
<td>19.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Sloan Center on Aging & Work, 2009-2010 Generations of Talent Study

OLDER ADULTS ARE (NOT) “DONE”
UNPAID WORK: VOLUNTEERING AND CAREGIVING
OLDER ADULTS ARE (NOT) “DONE”
It’s personal. It’s professional. It’s your future: Transform it.
THANK YOU

CONTACT

morrow-howell@wustl.edu  pittcats@bc.edu

Graphics:  Andrew Reynolds, Doctoral Candidate, Boston College School of Social Work