**Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal
Special Issue Call for Papers**

**Meanings, contexts and future of ageing studies: Intersections of Age and Ageing with
Organizations**

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Thematic Focus of Special Issue:
Building on QROM's special issue entitled "Approaches, methods and critical diversity scholarships: The challenges and the outcomes" (Bleijenbergh et al., 2018), we are calling for papers to investigate critical qualitative methodological approaches to study the intersection of age and ageing with organizations. Recent debates surrounding age, ageing and organizations highlight that we need to create knowledge focused on discourses and the discursive nature of age and ageing in organizations (Thomas et al., 2014). This particular intersection has not been adequately addressed in various literatures including age/ageing and motivation to continue working (e.g. Kooij et al., 2008), multiple jeopardy (King, 1988) such as intersections of gender, race, sexual orientation, sexual preference, etc. (e.g. Jack et al., 2016; Riach et al., 2014), and discrimination and discriminatory practices in organizations (e.g. Chiu et al., 2001; Duncan and Loretto, 2004; James and Wooten, 2006; Riach et al., 2014). More often than not, the tone taken by age and ageing studies has been one of replicating determinism, negative connotations associated with the elderly (Salminen et al., 2018), and self-evidence with respect to age and ageing in the workplace (e.g. Nelson, 2005). Age and ageing in organizations are then reflected as a grand narrative which essentializes and universalizes the 'older' worker into one stable, stereotypical understanding, or compares this 'older' worker to a 'younger' worker, as the norm to be followed within an organizational context.

Tied to these ontological and epistemological notions of the 'older' worker in organizations, the question of how to surface critical meanings around age and ageing, beyond chronological, time-dependent explanations, remains an unanswered question across the literature. This is not to say that there haven't been interesting methodologies that have been used in the past (e.g. Jack et al., 2016; Riach et al., 2014; Tomlinson and Colgan, 2014). We are underlining, in this special issue, that the many paths for considering age and ageing in organizations are methodologically neglected in the critical qualitative realm, and this warrants our attention.

Recent Debates around Age and Ageing, and Organizations:

The dominant way to understand and conceptualize age has been to embrace a chronological approach (Aaltio et al., 2014; Fineman, 2014; Irni, 2009). Questions related to age and ageing are usually quantitatively-oriented, and intersections of ageing and gender, in particular, are rare in the majority of studies that we considered in our review of the literature. Case in point, the United Nations, in 2017, embraced this chronological approach to the question of global ageing. In particular, they found that there were 962 million people over the age of 60 years old in 2017, underlining that this part of the population is twice as large as it was in 1980 (United Nations, 2017). Developed regions - Europe, North America, Australia, New Zealand, and Japan (United Nations, 2017) - were also targeted in this study, underscoring that an increase of 38% in the number of 'older' persons would be seen by 2050. Developing regions of Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Asia were projected to triple, double, and double, respectively, in the number of 'older' people (United Nations, 2017).

Definitions and understanding of age and ageing are culturally-bound, accentuating that various societies do not address age and ageing in a similar way. Asian cultures, as Leung (2000) found, value ageing more than Western societies. However, as Chiu, Chan, Snape and Redman (2001) discuss, Chinese culture may value elders, but Hong Kong in particular has been slower than the UK with respect to equal opportunity legislation when it comes to issues of age and ageing in organizations. Western societies, such as North America and Europe, have also been recognized as adopting ambivalence towards the value of ageing employees (Schalk et al., 2010). When we consider the role of age and ageing in organizations, Western societies emphasize the need for workers to stay in work-life longer; however, ageing employees are frequently the main victims of downsizing or restructuring (Buyens et al., 2009). The focus has been on different kinds of practices for managing the 'older' workforce, including leadership and human resource management (Walker, 2005). In these models, Western organizations are seen as black boxes, and employees are viewed as passive and something-to-manage, without having voice, when it comes to their age and ageing experiences in the workforce.

Issues surrounding age and ageing are finding a place among diversity management scholars, including those with an interest in gender (Irni, 2009), ethnicity and cultural background (Price et al., 2017), and other typologies and their crossings (Aaltio et al., 2016). Age management or "age-aware" human resources management (HRM) and sustainable HRM practices have also been closely related to organizational corporate social responsibility (CSR) practices (Ehnert and Harry, 2012). The impact of age on such things as stereotypes of the ageing worker (Brought et al., 2011; Hedge et al., 2006; Nelson, 2005), workplace efficiency, career development, retirement policies, experience (Kanfer and Ackerman, 2004), and training needs (Ilmarinen, 2006) have also been the subject of study. Equity between different age groups and talent management issues have also been studied (Cook and Rougette, 2017).

Academia recognizes that 'old' age may bring valuable expertise and wisdom, what can be referred to as crystallized intelligence (Kanfer and Ackerman, 2004). On the other hand, stereotypes related to 'older' employees include being viewed as less productive, less healthy, and less able to cope with change (Brought et al., 2011; Hedge et al., 2006). This stigma and label may be especially injurious for the 'older' workforce when framed within the nature of change in organizations. Experience and wisdom, while perceived positively, can nonetheless suggest sedentary and established qualities, rather than an ability to respond in new and innovative ways to change. Although recent research has shown that the

assumption of a general decline with age is simplistic, stereotypical assumptions tend to continue to be adopted (Fineman, 2014), including the use of secondary baby talk when speaking to 'older' individuals (Nelson, 2005).

Invitation to Authors to Submit to this Special Issue:
In this special issue, we invite papers that embrace age and ageing at the intersection of the organization beyond statistical and other numerical methodological approaches. We are specifically asking authors to investigate, through a critical diverse qualitative approach (Bleijenbergh et al., 2018), the meanings, contexts and future of ageing studies by moving away from a 'number', while moving towards innovative discursive understandings of the diverse 'older' worker. We acknowledge the United Nations (2017) statement that the global population is ageing, and this at disproportionate rates across what they categorized as developing and developed countries. We also acknowledge the burgeoning menopause literature (e.g. Brewis et al., 2017; Jack et al., 2018), with its focus on 'older' women who are in the workforce, and what organizational policies should be put in place to support these individuals. We underline, however, that age and ageing individuals are not necessarily 45 years old, 60 years old, or over; there are multiple reflexive subjectivities (Hayes et al., 2016) that are context specific (Hulko, 2009), and intersectional approaches (Cho et al., 2013; McCall, 2005) that need to be drawn out from age and ageing experiences in organizations.

The notions of jobs, careers and work in organizations is broad in and of itself. When the meanings of age and ageing are interwoven into these various concepts representing context, the movement of 'older' individuals in particular organizations increases this consideration of diversity (Tervo and Haapanen, 2017). Ageing individuals may circulate between working and non-working experiences, such as voluntary work outside of the home, including after the North American and European prescribe retirement age of 65 (Schalk et al., 2010). Labels such as 'old,' 'elderly' and 'stable' within organizations can reflect negative connotations that can be embodied by the worker (Fineman, 2014; Thomas et al., 2014). These negative meanings along with the growing population of ageing individuals implied, for us, that there needs to be a re-understanding and a re-structuring to not only acknowledge life-span, age, and ageing, but also to grow our comprehension of organizational careers, jobs, and work as well, in light of different meanings that can be attributed to age and ageing. Some examples of discourse that are leading to interesting developments in the age and ageing intersection with organizations is "successful ageing" (Thomas et al., 2014, p. 1570) and the "silent issue" (Jack et al., 2014, p. 3) of menopause in organizations. This need for a re-understanding and re-structuring requires methodological approaches that walk hand-in-hand with these meanings and theoretical frameworks in such a way to expand our knowledge of age and ageing at the intersection of organizations.

In line with *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management Journal* goals, we are seeking submissions that take a broadly critical stance, that discuss subjective and context-specific issues of research practice pertinent to qualitative approaches. Specifically, this SI is calling for papers that:

(1) problematize the presentation and the use of age and ageing, in organizations, beyond temporal/chronological framings;

(2) take a broadly critical stance, discussing subjective and context-specific issues of research practice pertinent to qualitative methodological approaches, with respect to age and ageing at the intersection with organizations;

(3) discuss subjective, and possibly reflexive, experiences of age and aging in organizations. Studies, possibly "in-depth", or longitudinal in nature, that support the development of a discussion surrounding the meanings of age and ageing in organizations will also be considered; and,

(4) advance critical inquiry by exposing and exploring the various meanings surrounding age and ageing in organizations.

We invite papers that explore, but are not limited to, the following questions:

- What are some possible meanings of age and ageing in organizations, that move us beyond reified, negative norms? How can we surface these meanings in qualitative studies?
- Can we move beyond age as a category to make sense of the 'old' in jobs/careers/work? If so, what qualitative methodological approach would best help us to move beyond labels and categories?
- How are biological changes and transitions due to reproductive age dealt with at the organization and at the individual level? How are they made sense of (for instance, generalizations and stereotypes), and what is the role of gender in these questions?
- How do global or cultural understandings of age and ageing in organizations impact our methodological choices?
- How do we explore the intersections of age and ageing with job-work-career practices in organizations?
- What of intersections of age/ageing and LGBTQ+ in the workplace? What methodologies can be used to reveal these intersections?
- How do we move beyond the global 'youth' workforce roles and identities within organizations as a norm, in such a way to embrace 'older' workers?
- How do we leverage career research, age and ageing, in our methodologies?
- What shifts between work/non-work and private life at the intersection of age and ageing can we study? With what kind of methodology can we study this shift?
- How do we surface questions of equality and discrimination with respect to age and ageing in organizations?

The submission should be no more than 10,000 words. This word limit includes tables and figures, and excludes the title page and references. All submissions should conform to the submission guidelines for Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: http://www.emeraldgrouppublishing.com/products/journals/author_guidelines.htm?id=qrom

Anticipated Schedule:

The deadline for submission is **March 15th, 2020**. Papers invited to be revised and resubmitted will require that authors work within a tight timeframe for revisions. For further information, please contact the primary guest editor of this SI, Stefanie Ruel: stefanie.ruel@videotron.ca

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