



human relations

Human Relations Special Issue call for papers

***Reinventing Retirement:
New pathways, new arrangements, new meanings***

Guest Editors:

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A dramatic wave of ageing employees on the cusp of retirement is building in workplaces around the developed world. From the lowliest workers to executives, unprecedented numbers will reach traditional retiring ages over the coming decades, raising critical issues for sustainable labour and talent management. In the 20 years between 2005 and 2025, the proportion of Europeans who are over 60 will rise from 22% to 29%, of Americans over 60 from 17% to 24%, of Canadians, Australians and New Zealanders over 60 from 18% to 27%, and of Japanese over 60 from 26% to 35% (United Nations, 2007). And these potential retirees are not just any older cohort. They are the fabled Baby Boomers, that path-breaking generation whose behaviour can not be predicted reliably from the deeds of those who went before them.

Organisations face new challenges as they begin to realise the scale of the issue, just as baby boomers themselves may seek to reinvent late careers and retirement. One key analyst believes that, in the immediate future, "high quality management of this group [baby boomers] is no longer just an option but rather a business necessity" (Feldman, 2007, p. 164). Governments and employers are developing and mulling over a range of alternatives and choices, often focused around removing incentives to early retirement and raising the rewards for prolonged employment through increasing the pension age as well as access to retirement assets. They are busily realigning the institutional arrangements that frame retirement pathways. Of course, the effectiveness of new policies and practices will depend on the developing needs and expectations of potential retirees, and on how they view 'retirement'. Often implicitly, existing career models represent retirement as amongst the most predictable of career stages, with retirement happening in a particular time span and being characterized by individual decline and disengagement (Levinson, 1978; Schein, 1976). Early empirical work on retirement in *Human Relations* still captures the default view of many analysts in categorizing men as engaging in one of three retirement strategies: 1) *re-engagement* with families or hobbies; 2) *disengagement*, with grave losses; or 3) *re-alignment* for a life of ease and pleasure (Crawford, 1971). Yet, four decades later, there is every reason to believe that baby boomers are different. Their social and political attitudes and practices are easy to distinguish from those of earlier generations (e.g., Goldsmith, 2008; Martin, 1994); they have pioneered new workplace roles for women, raising women's workforce participation and making dual earner couples the modal experience; they are the first generation in developed countries to have life expectancies into the late 70s and 80s.

As governments and organisations realign the retirement goalposts, and baby boomers explore their late career and retirement options, we ask whether our models for understanding the retirement process need to be reassessed and renewed. The purpose of this Special Issue is to advance novel ways of thinking about retirement by developing new theoretical perspectives and harnessing methodologies that focus on the multiple meanings of retirement and distinctive behavioural pathways. We welcome conceptual and empirical papers that make clear contributions to this effort. These may include life course approaches, discursive or narrative methods, longitudinal assessments, or cross-cultural or generational perspectives, although they are not limited to these. We also strongly encourage works that are multidisciplinary in nature; for example, works that traverse gerontology and human resource management or demography and organisational behaviour.

Thus, we invite work that may investigate the following questions:

- What are the new and novel ways to navigate late career and retirement? How relevant and meaningful today are the old assumptions that decline and disengagement are an inevitable function of biological ageing? Is retirement being 'reinvented'?
- How are government and organizations responding to the needs of their ageing workforce and what are the implications for HR practice? How are organizations changing retirement policies and practices, and/or offering alternative forms of employment to retain employees longer to benefit the firm?
- How are new pathways and new organizational arrangements interacting, conflicting, harmonising, and mutually reshaping each other?
- How can the dichotomies of generativity and disengagement be reconciled when trying to understand emerging late career and retirement patterns?
- What is the role of relationships in the contemporary retirement process? What are the crossover and/or dyadic effects of retiring on couples?
- How is identity de- or re- constructed through late career and retirement?
- How do individuals 'talk' about retirement? Do people resist 'retirement'? To what extent are conceptions of retirement culturally bound?
- How have exogenous shocks such as the global financial crisis reconfigured what retirement means?
- Has the changing nature and role of pensions and access to retirement assets led to new behavioural retirement patterns?
- Are processes of 'individualization' (e.g., Beck, 1992) driving changes in the institutional environment of late careers and retirement, and in individuals' shifting pathways during this phase of life?

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To be considered for this Special Issue, submissions must fit with the Aim and Scope of Human Relations – please see: http://www.tavainstitute.org/humanrelations/about_journal/aims.html.

Contributors should note:

- This call is open and competitive, and the submitted papers will be blind reviewed in the normal way.
- Submitted papers must be based on original material not under consideration by any other journal or outlet.
- The guest editors will select five papers to be included in the Special Issue; additional high quality papers submitted in this process may be published in other issues of the journal.

The deadline for submission is 31 January 2011.

Papers to be considered for this Special Issue should be submitted online in accordance with our submission guidelines: http://www.tavainstitute.org/humanrelations/submit_paper.html.

Please direct any questions about the submission process, or any administrative matter, to Claire Castle, Managing Editor: humanrelationsjournal@tavainstitute.org.

The Guest Editors for this Special Issue are very happy to discuss initial ideas for papers with potential authors, and may be contacted directly:

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