

Intersections of Ageing, Gender, Sexualities (I-AGES)

6-7th July 2015

Workshop Report

Intersections of Ageing, Gender, Sexualities (IAGES) was a two day workshop held at the University of Surrey from 6th-7th July 2015. The event was co-organised by Andrew King (Sociology and CRAG), Sue Westwood (FHS and CRAG) and Sara Arber (Sociology and CRAG), with additional input from Peter Hegarty (Psychology) and Roberta Guerrina (Politics). 40 participants from 11 countries attended the workshop which comprised one plenary and three keynote speaker presentations, plus a further 20 presentations along with discussions and interactive working groups.

Workshop objectives

This two day multidisciplinary workshop sought to combine theoretical and empirical contributions from a variety of disciplines to intersections of ageing, gender and sexualities. We were interested in gaining insights from:

- Theoretical work on the intersections of ageing, gender and sexualities;
- Empirical work on how gender and sexualities intersect in later life;
- Empirical work on inequalities and forms and strategies of empowerment, relating to the intersection of ageing, gender and sexualities, alongside others such as ethnicity, nationality, social class, religion and disability.

Summary of Presentations

Our workshop was opened by **Sara Arber**, Professor of Sociology and Co-Director of the Centre for Research on Ageing and Gender (CRAG) at the University of Surrey who then introduced our plenary speaker, **Professor Toni Calasanti** of Virginia Tech, USA. Toni's presentation explored intersections in relation to partner caregiving, particularly amongst lesbian and gay people. She emphasised the need to adopt a theoretical lens to address empirical questions. Papers in the first paper stream concerned the theme of embodiment. **Rafaella Ferro Camoletto and Chiara Bertone** explored intersections of ageing masculinities in relation to Viagra adverts and how these inculcate certain embodied understandings of ageing, gendered, sexualities. **Lingfang Cheng** then presented evidence from a study of in-depth interviews with 45 post-menopausal women in Taiwan. Her presentation explored intersections of class, ethnicity and disability in their narratives of ageing, gendered, sexualities. **Michelle Ong** presented her research on understandings of beauty and beauty practices amongst Filipino, migrant women in New Zealand, whilst **Richard Green** explored the narratives of older men who were prostate cancer survivors, focusing on narratives of masculinity and sexuality. All of the presentations in this session sought to disrupt the normativities of ageing, gender and sexuality that often frame questions about the body in later life.

Professor Mark Hughes gave a keynote presentation on health and well-being amongst older lesbian and gay men in Australia and illustrated the usefulness of quantitative data to the question of ageing, gender, sexualities and their intersections. Mark outlined how useful quantitative studies are, but also how diversity and difference can be obscured. The second paper session of the day explored queer kinship. The three presentations in this session sought to trouble, or 'queer', certain aspects of lesbian, gay and bisexual later life. **Rebecca Jones'** presentation queered the idea of 'families of choice' amongst older bisexual people, whilst Yiu-Tung Suen questioned notions of choice amongst older single gay men. Finally in this session, **Sue Westwood** examined the complexities and intersections amongst older lesbian and gay men's will-writing practices. The theme of troubling, or queering, was then carried forward into the final paper session of day one, which focused on temporal dislocations. **Kinneret Lahad and Haim**

Hazan explored how ageist and sexist constructions of age form prevalent understandings of late singlehood. **Jill Wilkens'** presentation examined stereotypical constructions of citizenship and their implications for older lesbian and bisexual women. Her presentation particularly focused on the important and often overlooked intersections of class in this dynamic. Finally in this session, **Elham Amini** presented debates about insider/outsider status in research focusing on menopausal Iranian women.

Day two of the workshop commenced with another keynote presentation. **Professor Yvette Taylor** discussed the 'Queer' subject of 'getting on' – what it means to 'get on', 'come of age' and how life course trajectories frame and are reframed by queer temporalities. This was followed by a session on 'representations'. In this session, **Emmanuel Magoji** discussed his ongoing doctoral studies, exploring ageing, gender, sexualities in UK print advertisements, approaching this from a marketing perspective. **Maricel Oró-Piqueras'** presentation focused on the representation of female sexuality in three novels – Penelope Lively's 'Moon Tiger', Angela Carter's 'Wise Children' and Doris Lessing's 'The Grandmothers' – examining how ageing female bodies are associated with a lack of desire and troubling this representation. **Elizabeth Barry'** presentation examined the menopause in philosophy, sexual politics and cultural representations showing how these disciplines constitute particularly contested intersections between ageing, gender and sexuality. The fifth session of the workshop sought to address different ways of assessing intersections. **Ieva Stoncikaite** used Erica's Jong's writing on female sexuality as a way of framing and problematising ideas about 'healthy ageing'. **Neal King** used an intersectional lens to question and provoke ideas about hegemonic masculinity and how this impacts on notions of ageing. **Chryssy Hunter** discussed the increasingly recognised complexity (and intersectionality) of trans* and sexgender nonconforming identities, especially in the context of ageing, ranging from questions of (in)visibility to contemporary discourses of diversity. Finally, in this session, **Andrew King** explored the methodological implications of intersectionality drawing on the conversation analytic work of Harvey Sacks and applying it, through membership categorisation analysis to accounts of lesbian, gay and/or bisexual ageing. The final presentation session of the workshop was themed around 'age, gender, sexuality and care'. **Neil Henderson and Kathryn Almack** presented a critical review of LGBT ageing and care in different national/geo-political contexts and outlined the development of a research project being undertaken by them in South Africa. **Kathryn Almack's** subsequent presentation then examined ways in which sexuality and gender identity may impact on experiences of ageing, end of life care and bereavement, through discussion of findings from the Last Outing project in the UK. Finally, drawing on her doctoral work, **Orla Parslow-Breen** explored the heteronormativity of many understandings of caregiving relationships and the consequent implications for mid-life lesbian caregivers. The final session on day two of the workshop, was an open workshop entitled '**setting new research agendas**'. Working in small groups, delegates discussed what they felt were new research areas in relation to ageing, gender and sexuality and their intersection and how these new areas could be addressed. This session enable presenters and other delegates to discuss ideas they had heard, perhaps for the first time, at the workshop and to form new networks and collaborations that could be useful in the future.

Key themes from the workshop

The main points to emerge from questions during presentation sessions and in the final workshop were:

- intersections between ageing, gender and sexualities sometimes prioritise one or other of these forms of social division, privilege and (dis)empowerment and it is important to consider them working together.
- ageing, gendered, sexualities are normatively constructed as heteronormative and cisnormative. Finding ways to challenge these is important, academically and politically.

- More consideration needs to be given to methods of exploring intersections and finding ways to bridge a binary of quantitative and qualitative research.
- Cross and interdisciplinary are central to and important in understanding intersections of ageing, gender and sexualities. There needs to be more cross/interdisciplinary research and writing.
- Cross cultural research is important– particularly in recognition of diversities in relation to the intersection of ageing, gender and sexualities in different national and geo-political contexts. Remaining attuned to everyday lives and their social-political framing is important.

Next steps

Several outputs based on the workshop and other activities are planned by the organising committee. A proposal for an edited collection of selected papers presented at the conference will be submitted to Policy Press in Winter 2015/16. A number of delegates/presenters are due to collaborate on a proposal for a funded international network regarding LGBT ageing. Workshop participants will remain in contact with a view to future collaborations.

Acknowledgements

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