

SHOULD I STAY OR SHOULD I GO NOW? DECIDING TO RETIRE (A CASE STUDY)

by James M. Tolliver (retired), University of New Brunswick | Céleste Grimard, Université du Québec à Montréal | Daniel F. Coleman (retired), University of New Brunswick

Gryphon@unb.ca
grimard.celeste@uqam.ca
Dan@unb.ca
Full paper
Experiential Track

ABSTRACT

In this case study, we witness a conversation between three colleagues: Kathy, who is thinking about retiring, and Dusty and Ian who have already retired. Together they explore the factors that push employees toward retirement and those that pull them back into their work. The case study explores how to make the difficult decision to retire and adjust to retirement, especially in terms of one's social identity. Students of HR, organizational change, career transitions, and academic careers may find the case study to be particularly relevant.

CASE STUDY

It was a challenging walk from the faculty parking lot to Joe's Diner. "What a day," thought Kathy Kirby one grey Saturday morning as the wind grabbed at her coat and rippled the ice-rimed puddles along the sidewalk. "This must be what Twain had in mind when he wrote 'Winter is begun here now, I suppose. It blew part of the hair off the dog yesterday and got the rest this morning.'"ⁱ

Kathy has been with Megalith University for around 30 years, lately teaching mostly Ph.D. students and the odd class of master's hopefuls. Her teaching reviews are, for the most part, good, but with the occasional complaint, we should add, since she's both very smart and very demanding, wanting her students to *actually* learn something. About 20 years ago she tried her hand at administration as an Associate Dean. But, after a few years, she gave it up, focusing on research and becoming one of Megalith's star researchers. Lately, however, she's been more than a little troubled, well, not troubled exactly, but perplexed, for – despite her success – the pull of retirement has grown stronger every year, and yet...

Well, as they say, one of the best things to do when you're in a strange country and lost is to ask for directions from the locals. So, her mission today was to meet her former colleagues George "Dusty" Rhodes and Ian Finagle, hoping they can help her. While Dusty retired from the university about a year ago, Ian has been retired for well over a decade. Kathy told herself that, if anyone knows what retirement is like for an academic, it would be her two oldest friends. And so her trip to Joe's Diner.

Now if you've been lucky enough to be in a place like Joe's, you'd recognize it at once and, just as quickly, feel at home. It's a holdover from the 1940s, longer than wide, with a lunch counter along the left side, and booths set along the high windows on the right. A place of cheeseburgers, milkshakes, and inexpensive breakfasts, where the waitresses call you by name after a few visits and cheerfully provide endless coffee refills for a reasonable tip. A place of blue-plate specialsⁱⁱ and the only five-cent jukebox 'still in captivity.' It was home to generations of students looking for acceptance and a decent meal, and to alumni chasing youth and memories. And on a Saturday morning, it was, as usual, packed, which explains Kathy's rather frigid walk from the faculty parking lot six blocks away after trying to find a spot near the diner. "Hmm," thought Kathy as she stepped inside, grateful for the warmth, and looked for Dusty and Ian, "Kerr was right. The university is a collection of misfits held together by a common concern about parking."ⁱⁱⁱ

After a minute Kathy spotted Dusty and Ian in the last booth, deep in conversation. Dusty, who faced the door, saw her first.

"Hi Kat! Welcome to the palace of Caffeine and Cholesterol," said Dusty, smiling and pointing to the sign hanging behind the counter that read, 'Don't make fun of the coffee. You'll be old and weak someday too!'^{iv}

Ian looked over his left shoulder, "Well, Professor Kirby," [broadly smiling, then] "Hi old friend. It's good to see you!" then slid over so Kathy could sit down. "How're things in the 'Puzzle Factory,'^v [meaning the university], and how have *you* been?"

“Well, ok, I guess, but I want to talk with you guys about something. It’ll wait till my second cup of coffee. How have you been?” The next 30 minutes were spent in small talk, of people they knew, faculty politics, and not a few laughs over battles fought, both lost and won.

Finally, after a lull in the conversation, Kathy said, “Guys, I want to find out the good, the bad, and the ugly about retirement, why you finally retired, and what things were like afterward. It’s not a question of *if* I retire, it’s a question of *when*: in a few months or a couple of years. I mean we’ve got one guy in his 80s still around; *I* don’t want to be a hanger-on who doesn’t see that she’s past her prime. I want to get on with my life. What decision will give me peace?”

“Well,” Ian said, “One of the issues you’re dealing with is opportunity cost. Ask, ‘What do I get if I hang in there for a couple of years?’ A couple of years’ pay and more pensionable service for sure. But what do you give up? What’s the *after tax* difference between being on salary and taking a pension for that time? Figure out what you’ll get and what you’ll give up. Then ask yourself, ‘If someone offered me the freedom to do what I want without university politics for those two years, would I be willing to buy those two years of freedom for the difference between what I’d get on pension, all considered, and what I’d get if I stay, all considered.’”

“Ah, you’re right, Ian,” Dusty jumped in, “But, beyond the cost/benefit way to time your retirement, there’s an emotional way as well. It works like this: Get a coin and tell yourself, ‘Heads I’ll retire in two years, tails I’ll retire in a few months.’ Then flip the coin. If you regret what the coin tells you to do, then you’ll know, emotionally, what you really want (the other choice). If you’re happy with what the coin tells you to do, then you also know. And if you don’t know if the coin is ‘right’ or not, then you need to give the decision more time and see what the world tells you.”

“Thanks, guys. It’s one heck of a step,” Kathy sighed.

“More like a jump off a cliff,” Ian remarked, “Are you really thinking of jumping?”

“Well, yes, and no. I don’t know *what* I’m getting into, but I do know that I’m tired. Do you remember the line ‘I feel all thin, sort of stretched, if you know what I mean: like butter that has been scraped over too much bread’?^{vi} Well, that’s me.”

“Hmm,” said Dusty, “I guess you’ve got your financial house in order?”

“I do. I won’t be rich, but I’ll have enough. And, given that we have a defined benefit pension, we’re luckier than most. Money isn’t the issue, at least not yet.”^{vii}

“Then what is?” asked Dusty.

“Being a professor isn’t what I *do*, it’s who I *am*. Who *am* I if I am not a professor? How did you guys let go of what was the center of your life for decades, your calling? Dusty, you were one of the best deans the joint ever had, and Ian, you were a great teacher. Why’d you leave, and what was it like afterward?”

Ian and Dusty looked at each other for a moment, “You first, Ian,” said Dusty.

“A couple of things, I guess. I kept thinking about *Star Trek* when the lead character says, ‘Recently I’ve become aware that there are fewer days ahead than there are behind.’ I asked myself ‘Is teaching folks who ‘take my words and leave my meaning’ how I want to spend the rest of my days? The answer was ‘no.’ Kathy, I spent a lot of time putting together good lectures, cutting edge stuff, and then to simply be asked ‘Do we have to know this crap for the test?’ was, well, disheartening.”

“So, you left?”

“Not right then. But as I got older, I wanted to pay more attention to myself and my family and less attention to the world. I decided that I could either keep making a very small difference to the folks I taught or a very big difference to the person I married. And that did it.”

“Oh,” said Kathy, “How *is* Marcy these days?”

“Great! She’s as happy as ever. We’re not traveling as much as we used to, so we’ve got a lot more time for gardening and walking – and at our age, you’ve got to keep moving – and there’s *always* something to do around our place. We’re never bored. We’ve got each other, we love each other’s company, and we laugh a lot too. Getting out was a great decision.”

“But, Ian, don't you miss it, sometimes?”

“Yeah, mainly at the start of the fall semester – when the leaves turn. [Sighing] I'm like an old fire horse answering the bell, I guess.^{viii} For the first few weeks of fall, I'd love to get back into the classroom, but it would take time away from Marcy and what we want to do together.”

“Ian, it sounds like you're having a great time.”

[After a pause] “I am Kathy, but well, as I've gotten older, I'm convinced a Ph.D. program, like youth, is wasted on the young. I could finally get something out of a good Ph.D. program now if I had the time and was much younger. I've got more research ideas than I ever had when I was working, and I still think teaching is one of the greatest joys one can have. But that said, I love our retirement, and I simply don't know how we ever found the time to work. We've been retired for about 16 years now. Marcy retired when I did, and it seems like just a bit longer sabbatical for both of us. So, for me, the general feeling is joy, mixed with a tinge of regret, but we've had the time of our lives and would do it again in a heartbeat. So, Kathy, welcome, perhaps soon, to the club!”

[After another cup of coffee all around...]

“Dusty, why'd you leave?”

“Kat, for me it was a combination of things. I'd been in Administration for over 20 years doing a whack of stuff my bosses wanted. It got to the point where, if they wanted someone to take a 'shot for the team,' I got volunteered. And it was a lot of stress, let me tell you. And you've heard of 'old wine in new bottles'?”

“Yea, where old ideas are presented as something new.”

“Well, my problem was new *bottlers*; They'd ask me to do a report that'd been done 10 or even 20 years ago and then put in the 'circular file.’^{ix} The guys asking for the report didn't have the background to know that what they wanted had been kicked around and was a dead issue or a 'third rail.’^x And often they wouldn't take 'no' for an answer.”

“Then why not just fall back into a faculty slot?”

“Kat, I hadn't taught a full teaching load for over 20 years. I just couldn't see doing that, especially given our undergraduates. An Administrator is what I was and, if you'd dig deep enough, still am. I had a bunch of unused sabbatical leave, so I thought I'd use it up, go someplace nice, then help the new guy who'd be taking over my slot get his feet on the ground. But something curious happened....”

“Oh, what?”

“When I got back, I didn't get a single call from the guy or from anyone else for that matter. I thought I'd at least be called on for organizational memory or to justify some of the decisions I made. But even though I was still on sabbatical for a few more months and finishing some stuff up at home, I didn't get a single call.”

“Same thing happened to me,” said Ian, “Once I told folks I was retiring I became a ‘visitor.’ I wasn't badly treated, far from it, but for the months before I retired, I didn't have as much say as when folks thought I'd be there forever. But, by then, having less and less of a voice in the decisions of the day didn't bother me at all.”

“Why on earth not, Ian?” asked Kathy.

“I was leaving, and, maybe in some ways, I was already gone. I didn't have to live with the consequences. So, if the gang wanted to do away with a course I *really* felt was needed, I'd tell 'em it wasn't a good idea. But if they ignored me, so be it. They'd have to live with the fallout. Same for recruiting: if they recruited someone who was an incompetent jerk, they'd have to deal with 'em. I wouldn't. It might just be our faculty, but I think being cut out is universal. If it happens to you, Kathy, don't be surprised or hurt by it. It's a natural part of the retirement process, just like giving away your books and cleaning out your office. It's part of letting go of the job.

“Yep, Kat, Ian's right. And letting go is a *very* interesting process all said and done. After my sabbatical, I had to get out of there before I got dragooned back into the faculty. Anyway, there was a very nice retirement dinner, with an award or two mixed in.

And promises to keep in touch. It was quite a night. Yet the whole thing was sort of a letdown after that. But Ian mentioned your office: You might want to start giving away stuff now unless you've got a *lot* of room to spare at home.”

“Oh?”

“If you're like me, you've got several cubic yards of stuff taking up lots of room in your office. Unless you've got space at home, you won't be able to fit it all in, and even if you do, later you'll give it away or toss out most of it. I took a lot of stuff with me. I was trying to hold on to who I *was* by holding on to the things I *used*. But it didn't work out that way.”

“I did the same thing, Dusty,” said Ian, after looking at the cold rain clawing at the window next to him for a few minutes. “It took a while for me to realize I wasn't a professor any longer, I was just – well – me. I also tried to hold on to who I was, and it didn't work for me either. That was brought home to me about 10 years after I retired. Dusty, you were still working, and I dropped by for coffee. But I roamed the halls down where my office used to be for a few minutes. I didn't recognize half the names on the office doors.”

“We did hire a lot of folks after you left, Ian,” said Kathy, smiling, “For a few years, the budget situation improved.”

“I know, Kathy, but I also looked at the pictures of the old gang along the walls, those large ones of us along with the pictures of the latest graduating class, year after year – a history of us and our students. I was looking at all the photos of the folks we'd worked with over the years, and then it struck me that most of them were retired – or dead. The only thing I could think of was a few lines from a song: ‘We thought we could sit forever in fun. Though our chances were a million to one.’^{xi} [Then, much more brightly] Anyway, why do *you* want to get out? I know you say you're tired, but *why*?”

“Ian, I think it's because I've got enough, and I've had enough. I'll have enough to live on with my pension, and I no longer want to put up with university politics.”

“That's not changed?” asked Dusty.

“If anything, it's gotten worse,” Kathy sighed, “The faculty wants to keep our students satisfied. How can I have standards when there's a race to the bottom when a normal grade is an A and group assignments, which reduce a prof's marking load, are the norm? If I demand anything from our undergraduates, all it gets me are student complaints and a chat with our dean. I could follow the path of least resistance but, to quote Data from Star Trek, 'my ethical sub-routines won't let me.' And there's a constant war about what should count as research between our teachers and our researchers.”

“Another reason I wanted out,” said Dusty.

“And our annual performance evaluation process is still like a nest of biting ants. Folks nibble away at each other and at any glory or accomplishments that anyone else might have. Jealousy, pettiness, coalitions supporting under-performers...I've had enough.”

“Then burn your books, rip up your accounts, and let the wind take them from the highest tower,” advised Dusty with a smile, “Don't let the 'treachery of important littleness' break your heart. I know I wouldn't.”^{xii}

[After a few moments]. “Kathy, you've got some great reasons for wanting to leave, but why do you want to *stay*?”

[After another few moments]. “Right now, I'm teaching mostly master's students, and they're okay. And I've got a couple of great Ph.D. students. I'd like to see them finish in a year or two. But more than anything, the place *needs* me, I'm the best researcher they've got. I keep fighting so research will count for something. I don't want to abandon the younger guys to the anti-research mob. But, as I said, being a professor and a researcher is what I *am* too. And I'm really afraid that it'll be a lot harder to get any research done if I leave. Of course, I'm going to do research when I retire. It's in my blood. But I'm concerned about having access to electronic journals and other resources. And I simply don't know what life will be like for me when, or if, I go. That's why I wanted to talk with you guys.”

“Well,” said Ian, “I don't know if we've helped or not, but I hope so.”

“You've given me a lot to think about. [After a glance at her watch] But I guess I ought to get going. I've got a bunch of papers to grade, and I told my students I'd have 'em graded by Monday.”

"Yea, I have to go too," Dusty agreed, "I got some errands to run; I've gotten into woodworking lately, and I need some stuff from the Building Center.

"That's new!" said Ian, "I thought you and Emma were more into camping and that sort of stuff."

"We still are, and I'm glad that we've got the time for more of it now," said Dusty, "In fact, we've got another 'outdoor adventure' coming up in a week or so."

"Good grief! In this weather?" said Ian, "My idea of roughing it is a three-star hotel and no room service."

"Well, it all depends on what you're used to, I guess," said Dusty, "Anyway I've got a school board meeting tonight and some stuff to go over before the meeting. How about it, Ian, hanging around for a refill [pointing to Ian's coffee cup], or are you taking off too?"

"Nope, I'm heading out too."

"What's on your agenda today, Ian?" asked Kathy.

"Not sure yet. I was going to do some work in the yard, but not in this weather. [Pointing out the window] But I've got to stop for milk and sugar before I get home. Marcy's got some baking she wants to do this afternoon. Guess I'll be on clean-up duty. And I can wash dishes with the best of 'em." [Said with a large smile.]

"Sounds like fun," Kathy smiled, "But before I go, do you guys ever run across any of the old gang? Anyone else ever drop by?"

"Well," said Dusty, "Sometimes, Kat, but everyone's busy or distracted. Take Mike: he's not here over the winter. He has some kind of teaching job down south. He flies out at the start of September and isn't back till spring – like some bloody Canada Goose. He and Kim have a condo down there. He teaches twice a week, I guess, then he hits the beach the rest of the time."

"Yea, Mike told me he could probably get me some teaching work," said Ian, "And I was tempted, let me tell you, but at my age, given the demand for in-person teaching even in the *best* of times teaching a class in person is like working in a petri dish – and I'm not sure my immune system is up to the challenge. Besides, I don't want to take time away from Marcy."

"How about Frank, ever hear from him?"

"Oh, Kat..." said Dusty, "Didn't you hear? Frank passed away about nine months ago. He was working on some research up until about two weeks before he died."

"Wow. I'm sorry to hear that. He was a great guy, even if he liked to argue just for the hell of it. I'm sorry he's gone. Is his daughter okay?"

"Well, it was unexpected, but I guess she's handling it as well as anyone can. And she's older with a family of her own, so that helps. Having others to love often helps. And she had to do a lot for Frank near the end."

"Tell me about it," said Kathy, "My mom's older, and she always needs me for something since dad passed away. Sometimes I'm caught between what I *want* to do for mom and what I've *got* to do for the faculty. I don't mind helping, in fact, I love it, but I'm always..."

"Worried?" said Dusty, finishing her sentence.

"Yea, very worried. Sometimes."

Ian nodded, "Getting older isn't a crime, but it's damned inconvenient, let me tell you. *Everything* hurts as you grow older, something they never tell you. It's like being painted into a smaller and smaller corner in terms of what you can do for yourself. And you can bet your mom's worried too, but about *you*. She's lucky you live just a few blocks away, and I'm sure she appreciates everything you do for her."

"Thanks for that, Ian."

"I do hear from Becky, from time to time," said Dusty, trying to brighten the mood, "Doing great as a consultant and she's also teaching sailing over the summer. She sure knows how to handle a boat."

"I do remember a bunch of us going sailing with her about five or six years ago," said Kathy, "I think I'll give her a call and see if she'd like to get together with us."

Both Dusty and Ian nodded 'Yes,' then Dusty got up, "Well if you guys are ready, let's go."

Ian grabbed the bill. Dusty left a tip on the table saying, "Our treat, Kat," then "Where are you parked?"

"Faculty lot."

"I'll give you a ride up. I'm just outside the door."

Kathy hugged Ian saying, "Take care," and jumped in Dusty's car which, eventually stopped by Kathy's office building.

"Thanks for the ride – and the insights," said Kathy.

"You're welcome," said Dusty, "And, Kat, I don't know if we helped or not, but one thing I do know."

"What's that?" asked Kathy.

"Campbell was right. 'If you're sure of the path you're on, you're probably on someone else's path and taking someone else's journey, not your own. And you're very likely to get lost.'"^{xiv}

Kathy briefly hugged Dusty, waved goodbye, and watched him pull away.

Discussion Questions

1. Kathy is considering retiring in the next few months or two or so years. However, in her meeting with Ian and Dusty, her reluctance and hesitation are evident.
 - a) What factors are pushing Kathy into retirement?
 - b) What factors are pulling Kathy toward staying in her job?
 - c) Why is Kathy having trouble making her retirement decision?
 - d) On what basis should Kathy make her retirement decision?
 - e) In her shoes, would you retire (and how soon)? Justify your answer.
 - f) Do you think Kathy will be able to successfully adjust to retirement? Why or why not?
2. What pulled versus pushed Dusty and Ian into retirement?
3. Have Dusty and Ian successfully adjusted to retirement? Justify your answer.
4. What do your answers to the preceding questions tell you about planning for retirement as an academic?

END NOTES

- ⁱ Twain, M. (1892) Mark Twain quotations - Weather (twainquotes.com) Accessed May 24, 2022
- ⁱⁱ Blue-plate special - Wikipedia accessed May 28, 2022
- ⁱⁱⁱ Here Kathy is misquoting. The original quote is, “The university is a series of individual entrepreneurs held together by a common grievance about parking.” But, as we’ll see, she may be right. Quotes by Clark Kerr | Best Quotes of All Time accessed May 28, 2022
- ^{iv} Versions of this sign exist in eating places across North America. An example of this sign may be “Don't criticize the coffee, you'll be old & weak someday, too.” Lettering, Criticism, Olds (pinterest.ca) Original source unknown.
- ^v The concept of a university as a factory has a long and glorious history with people taking both sides of the debate. The source of the reference to a university as a “puzzle factory” is unknown.
- ^{vi} Kathy is quoting from one of the greatest fantasy works of all time: J. R. R. Tolkien (1965:58) *The Fellowship of the Ring*. New York: Ballantine Books, Bilbo to Gandalf. Italics, in the original, were removed. In her feelings, she is also not alone. A 2020 survey found increased stress, burnout, hopelessness, and despondency among a majority of faculty members both tenured and non-tenured, with over 30% of respondents thinking about either leaving the academy or retiring, or both. Of the tenured professors surveyed, over 70% had moved up their retirement date. Women and minority staff were disproportionately affected due, it is speculated, to family responsibilities and the structure of the university. See Covid&FacultyCareerPaths_Fidelity_ResearchBrief_v3 (1).pdf (chronicle.com) accessed May 2022
- ^{vii} Addressing the complexities of preparing financially for retirement is beyond the scope of this case and the expertise of the authors. However, Kathy is correct given that she is a tenured professor at a doctoral-level university. According to recent data, only about 30% of all U.S. faculty are tenured or tenure track. That leaves 70% of faculty in temporary or fixed-term positions. Data show that only 30% of U.S. institutions contribute to the retirement benefits of such contingent faculty members. As such, they are disadvantaged, resulting in the conclusion that, “The economic conditions for adjunct faculty members are particularly appalling: most faculty members who are paid per course section do not receive retirement or medical benefit contributions....” *The Annual Report on the Economic Status of the Profession, 2020-21* | AAUP (p.12) Accessed June 10, 2022.
- ^{viii} Reports exist of retired fire horses answering the fire bell after retirement. The last fire horse in Canada was ‘retired’ from Fredericton, New Brunswick in 1938. See *The Fire Horses - Canada's History* (canadashistory.ca) accessed June 13, 2022.
- ^{ix} This is a jocular term for a wastebasket or trashcan. See *Circular file - Idioms by The Free Dictionary* Accessed June 13, 2022,
- ^x A ‘third rail’ in this context is a controversial issue which usually best avoided. See *Third Rail Definition & Meaning - Merriam-Webster* Accessed June 13, 2022.
- ^{xi} This line is from Peter, Paul, and Mary's performance of Bob Dylan's *Dream*. For the precise lyrics go to Bob Dylan's Dream | The Official Bob Dylan Site. To hear the performance referenced go to *Bob Dylan's Dream - YouTube*. Both sites were accessed on June 14, 2022.
- ^{xii} Dusty and Kathy are borrowing passages from John Steinbeck's (1982: 269-270) *The Acts of King Arthur and His Noble Knights* where Sir Kay, King Author's Seneschal, is telling Sir Lancelot why he is afraid. As Sir Kay says, (1982:269) “Granite so hard that it will smash a hammer can be worn away by little grains of moving sand. And a heart that will not break under the great blows of fate can be eroded by the nibbling of numbers, the creeping of days, the numbing treachery of littleness, of important littleness.” New York: Avenel Books. So, it is with the treachery of constant criticism.
- ^{xiii} A small, shallow, glass dish used in a lab to grow bacteria, mold, and other organisms. See *Petri dish - Wikipedia* accessed June 17, 2022
- ^{xiv} “Whenever a Knight of the Grail tried to follow a path made by someone else, he went astray. Where there is a way or path, it is someone else's footsteps. Each of us has to find his own way. From *Works by Campbell: Quotations* | JCF: Works Accessed June 16, 2022.

TEACHING NOTES

Instructors may write to the authors for a copy of the detailed teaching notes.

REFERENCES

- American Association of University Professors (2021) The annual report on the economic status of the profession 2020-2021. The Annual Report on the Economic Status of the Profession, 2020-21 | AAUP
- American Association of University Professors (2021) The annual report on the economic status of the profession 2021-2022. The Annual Report on the Economic Status of the Profession, 2021-22 | AAUP
- Berg, L. D., Huijbens, E. H. & Larsen (2016). Producing anxiety in the neoliberal university. *The Canadian Geographer*, 60, 166-180.
- Berg, L. D. & Roche, M. M. (1997). Market metaphors, neo-liberalism and the construction of academic landscapes in Aotearoa/New Zealand. *Journal of Geography in Higher Education*, 21(2), 147-161.
- Boas, T. C. & Gans-Morse, J. (2009). Neoliberalism: From new liberal philosophy to anti-liberal slogan. *Studies in Comparative International Development*, 44(2), 132-161.
- Brower, H. H. (2013). From the editors: Professor as a calling. *Academy of Management Learning & Education*, 12(4), 537-539.
- Canti, T. (2014). Neoliberalism. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 43, 89-104.
- Feldman, D. C. (1994). The decision to retire early: A review and conceptualization. *Academy of Management Review*, 19(2), 285-311.
- Flaherty, C. (2020). Colleges lower the boom on retirement plans. *Inside Higher Education* <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2020/05/21>
- Gill, R. (2016) Breaking the silence: The hidden injuries of neo-liberal academia. Originally in Ryan-Flood, R., and Gill, R. (eds.) *Secrecy and Silence in the Research Process; Feminist Reflections* (2009:228-244). London.
- Haslam, N. (2016). Concept creep: Psychology's expanding concepts of harm and pathology. *Psychological Inquiry*, 27(1), 1-17.
- Lewin, K. (1951). *Field theory in social science: selected theoretical papers* (Edited by Dorwin Cartwright.).
- U.S. Department of Labor (2021) *National Compensation Survey: Employee Benefits in the United States, March 2021* Employee Benefits in the United States, March 2021 (bls.gov)
- Miron, A. M., Branscombe, N. R., Ball, T. C., McFadden, S. H. & Haslam, C. (2022) An interpretative phenomenological analysis of social identity transition in academic retirement. *Work, Aging and Retirement*, 8(1), 82-97.
- Rowson, T. S., & Phillipson, C. (2020). 'I never really left the university': Continuity amongst male academics in the transition from work to retirement. *Journal of Aging Studies*, 53, 100853.
- Scambler, G. (2018). Heaping blame on shame: 'Weaponising stigma' for neoliberal times. *The Sociological Review Monographs*, 66(4) 766-782.
- Shore, C. (2008). Audit culture and illiberal governance: Universities and the politics of accountability. *Anthropological Theory*, 8, 278-298.
- Smith, N. (2000). Afterword: Who rules this sausage factory? *Antipode*, 23(2), 330-339.
- Strage, A. A. (2018). Bringing academic retirement out of the closet. *New Directions for Higher Education*, 182, 29-45.
- Tizard, B & Owens, C (2001). Activities and attitudes of retired university staff. *Oxford Review of Education*, 27, 253-270.
- Turner, V. (1994). Betwixt and between: The liminal period in rites of passage. In *Betwixt and between: Patterns of Masculine and Feminine Initiation*. Mahdi, L., Foster, S. & Little, M. (Eds.). La Salle: Ill: Open Court, pp. 3-19.
- Wang, M. (2007). Profiling retirees in the retirement transition and adjustment process: Examine the longitudinal change patterns of retirees' psychological well-being. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 92 (2), 455-474.
- Wang, M. & Hesketh, B. (2012). Achieving well-being in retirement: Recommendations from 20 years of research. *Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology, Inc. Achieving Well Being in Retirement: Recommendations from 20 Years of Research* (shrm.org)
- Wang, M. & Shi, J. (2014). Psychological research on retirement. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 65, 209-233
- Wang, M. & Shultz, K. S. (2010). Employee retirement: A review and recommendations for future investigation. *Journal of Management*, 36 (1), 172-206.
- Welsh, J. (2021). Controlling academics: Power and resistance in the archipelago of post-COVID-19 audit regimes. *Anthropological Theory*, 21(4), 460-493.