



A Study of the Government and Media Discourse on Active Ageing in Singapore and its Effects on the Lived Experiences of Singapore Seniors

Mark BROOKE

National University of Singapore

ABSTRACT

Similarly to other countries around the world, Singapore is facing the problem of an increasingly ageing population. The number of elderly is expected to triple in the next two decades. One effect of this is the requirement of an elderly workforce to maintain social and economic stability. However, for this to be an effective solution to the demographic dilemma, the elderly must be healthy. Thus, an emphasis on active ageing through engagement in sport participation is encouraged. However, it seems that despite the government's rhetoric that it is implementing diverse and wide-scale programmes in a bid to help the elderly age successfully, actual participation among seniors in these activities, remains low. One reason for this, emerging from empirical interviews, is that despite knowledge of the ageing population, and the benefits of regular exercise, seniors are not sufficiently aware of the programmes implemented by the government. Based on the data compiled from this study, it is therefore recommended that more be done to maximise the potential of sporting campaigns at community and wellness centres.

Keywords: Active ageing, sport participation; governmentality, embodiment.

INTRODUCTION

There has been a burgeoning discourse on population ageing around the globe. The global population of older people, also known by the United Nations as the population aged 65 years and above, will experience a steep increase from 0.46 million in 2010 to 1.41 million in 2030 (Asher & Nandy, 2008). This number is projected to increase to 2 billion by 2050. It is argued that this change will mean a significant shift in the global age structure and a historic crossover with the population of the elderly as large as the child population (0-14 years). Similarly, in Singapore, the median age has increased from 20 years in 1970 to 24.4 years in 1980 and to 35.7 years in 2003 (Department of Statistics, 2005a). It is reported that this will heavily affect the old age dependency burden. According to the 2013 Singaporean Department of Statistics the old-age support ratio has fallen from 9.0 in year 2000 to 6.4 today. It is expected to decrease even further to 2.1 by year 2030, according to a recent National Population and Talent Division White Paper (2013: 12).

During the ageing process, an individual's immune systems tend to decline, and physical dangers become more apparent (Mirowsky, 1995). This physical vulnerability amongst the elderly is increased because this section of society cannot provide for its own needs and dependence on family systems; even in Asian societies, it is becoming less plausible for the elderly to rely solely on their family to support them. In such a situation, the elderly might be increasingly exposed to marginalization. The result could lead to increasing isolation, loneliness and fear. Sport participation has long been promoted in Singapore by the ruling People's Action Party (PAP) to shape its people. This is particularly evident in the

implementation of policies such as Trim and Fat (TAF) and the national fitness test (NAPFA) in schools, which seek to maintain young citizens in both physical and mental health. One effect of the ageing population, already cited, is the requirement of an elderly workforce to maintain social and economic stability. Active ageing through engagement in sport participation is one way to maintain a healthy elderly workforce and to promote autonomy and independence amongst the elderly. However, this concept is a highly controversial one, and its opponents belong to the tradition of *critical gerontology*.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Gerontology refers to a wide range of theoretical studies, ranging from constructions and deconstructions of aging, stemming from the phenomenological tradition, to study the lived experiences of the elderly, to issues of how discourses about the elderly are related to issues of power and control in society (Estes, Linkins, & Binney, 1996; Phillipson & Walker, 1987). This paper considers two concepts related to the field of gerontology *governmentality* and *embodiment*.

Governmentality

The body can be perceived as a 'space' upon which societal and cultural meanings are inscribed. The term '*governmentality*' (Foucault, 1977) can be used to analyse how the body is this object shaped through external social and political forces that govern populations (Foucault, 1977; Burchell, Gordon & Miller, 1991). In his work, "Docile Bodies," Foucault (1977: 170) argues:

Discipline 'makes' individuals; it is the specific technique of a power that regards individuals both as objects and instruments of its exercise.

The body can be said to be controlled by diffusive 'soft' power (ideological force) and coercive 'hard' measures (physical force). These forces, through surveillance and regulation, have been normalised in modern societies so that individuals are moulded to possess characteristics and values which resonate with a government's desired goals.

One of the constructions of control is the discourse in contemporary capitalist societies that considers the concept of *ageing*, in particular, *successful ageing* through *active ageing*. Although the term *active ageing* had been used in the social sciences of gerontology since the 1920s (Estes et al., 2001; Katz, 1996), it did not really appear in international policy or media until much later in 1988 (according to Walker, 2006) through OCED reports. Similarly, '*successful ageing*' can be traced back to the 1950s, but was popularized in the 1980s. It has since become ubiquitous and is inextricably linked with '*active ageing*'. In international policy-making, *active ageing* appeared for the first time in 1997 in a US Department of Health and Human Services' paper 'Active aging: a shift in the paradigm' (as reported in Moulaert & Paris, 2013), which saw the need to remodel ageing from a stage of dependency and decline. The term was then adopted by the WHO (2002: 12), who defined it as:

Continuing participation in social, economic, cultural, spiritual and civic affairs, not just the ability to be physically active or to participate in the labour force.

However, this broad focus on cognitive and social as well physical health was soon overshadowed by a new narrative. In 2006, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) entitled its global report on ageing: *Ageing and Employment Policies. Live Longer, Work Longer*. Thus, contemporary ageing is related to two dominant narratives: health

and productivity. *Active ageing*, through work, became a way to combat the chronic illnesses (mobility and autonomy difficulties) of *usual ageing*. At the same time, there was a discourse of 'responsabilisation' and a transferral of responsibilities from the state to the individual. In other words, health promotion is carried out to ensure that the subject governs itself while simultaneously presenting this activity as one of freedom and choice. As Rose (1999: 268) states:

Subjects are to do the work on themselves, not in the name of conformity, but to make them free.

Drawing on Cohen's (2002) model, Pike (2011) argues that *critical gerontology* should analyse the existence of this kind of regulating discourse by a concept such as the creation of a *moral panic*. According to Cohen (2002), there is a need for three elements for an effective moral panic: first, a group pinpointed as a national burden is required; second, a group perceived as a victim because it is required to support this burden; third, a consensus in society that the problem is a serious one and requires an agenda (Pike, 2011). This paper aims to analyse if this notion of constructing *moral panic* is evident in Singapore, and if so, what the effects of this are on the elderly.

Embodiment

In contrast to *governmentality*, the term *embodiment* is used to describe the subjectivity of the lived body in everyday life. This has its intellectual origins in Merleau-Ponty (1962). Much research based on a symbolic interactionist approach (Gubrium, 1986; Hazan, 1994; Katz, 1996) has led to a greater understanding of the interaction between mind and body to form selfhood during the process of ageing. A person experiences policy or *governmentality* through both the official objective body and the subjective body of lived experience. *Embodiment* thus examines the social space between identity, experience and social interaction, which creates a person's biographical narrative. This approach to understanding ageing is fundamentally different to the Foucauldian analysis of *governmentality*, which focuses on institutionalisation and the standardisation of human experience, not the actual experiences and subjectivities of embodiment felt by individual seniors in society.

RESEARCH PARADIGM

Research into how the role of government discourse and newspaper coverage constructs the 'successful' ageing concept has been conducted for the United States (Rozanova, 2010) and Canada (Laliberte Rudman & Molke, 2009). However, research based on the 'mentalities of government' (Dean, 1999) in Singapore, which help to legitimize these meanings is not common. This aspect of the research was facilitated through qualitative observational methodology to interpret current and historical data from both primary sources (Singapore Government documentation; salient local and international newspaper articles; and online blogs from both Singapore and overseas). In addition, phenomenological studies of Singaporean seniors are uncommon. As a sports sociologist, I also wished to find out from the grass roots what seniors thought and did about *active ageing*. Therefore, an interpretative approach using qualitative methodology through interviews was also chosen providing a life history approach with particular reference to the everyday sporting lives of the participants. Thus, both the lenses of *governmentality* and *embodiment* are used. By studying the public discourse on active ageing through sport participation as well as examining how seniors themselves live through these discourses, it is hoped that a deeper and more meaningful

understanding of the 'ageing body' and its relation to the 'sporting body' in Singapore will be attained.

Interviews with ten Singaporean seniors from Chinese, Malay and Indian origins were conducted. The interviews occurred in the field in three separate areas of Singapore. Six seniors are female and four are male. Two of these females were interviewed together. They were both part of the same Pétanque team. The participants' ages range from 62 to 81 years. All seniors are cited using pseudonyms. Semi-structured interviews were used to gain an in-depth view of the social realities of elderly Singaporeans. The research questions asked were open and were organised around the following themes:

- Personal health regimes;
- Knowledge and opinion of the Singapore's government's efforts in promoting sport participation amongst the elderly;
- Retirement/ working situation and attitude to work;
- Knowledge of the ageing demographic in Singapore.

Direct questions were not posed so that the interviews would be more 'reflexive' (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983). Interview transcripts were studied for thematic categories and interesting connections in the data identified. These were then coded into meaning units or categories to present the data.

RESULTS

What the government and media say

In Singapore, ageism permeates the functioning of the economy. There appears to be an orthodoxy that the social contribution of seniors can be through work. Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong stated in his National Day Rally (2007) that:

We've got to get the employers to recognize the value of older workers, deploy them effectively and make the most of their abilities and strengths.

With the ageing population, as noted by Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong's National Day Message in 2005, Singaporeans need to:

Keep active, stay healthy and work for as long as possible, so that as they age they can enjoy financial security, afford good medical care, and live more fulfilling lives.

In response to this challenge, many funding systems are in place to provide opportunities training to those over 40 (Employability Skills Systems; Skills Development Fund; Lifelong Learning Fund; National Continuing Education and Training Framework, Secondary Education Programme, Basic Education for Skills Training Programme and the Re-employment Assistance Programme). Thus, it is very common to see the elderly working in public spaces in Singapore. This is very much in contrast with the US and UK state-run systems and the philosophy that there is 'more to life than work' (Gilleard & Higgs, 2007; Harkin & Huber, 2004). The health system in Singaporean society is not welfare-centric. As stated in Teo (2006):

Singapore is well aware that market forces alone cannot deliver an equitable system of care for older people.

Consequently, the Singapore Council of the Third Age (2014) is promoting sport participation among the elderly to combat the inevitable decline that accompanies usual ageing and has put

in place several programmes for the elderly. This is presented within a holistic discourse entitled 'Six Dimensions of Wellness'. The six dimensions are spiritual, social, intellectual, physical, emotional and vocational wellness. In the same way, the latest campaign launched in April, 2014 by Sport Singapore, formerly known as the Singapore Sports Council, is ActiveSG. This is described as:

An all-encompassing and inclusive national movement for sport where all can experience the joy of living better through sport.

ActiveSG is one of the key recommendations for *Vision 2030*, which is a joint project set up by Sport Singapore (SS), and the Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth. This explores, in part, how sport can contribute to a healthy lifestyle. A senior's subcommittee is working to develop a multi-tiered outreach programme to meet the emerging needs of older people engaged in sport as well as to diversify sporting possibilities. The government's *Vision 2030* website is full of citations from the elderly discussing such as:

We may be getting older but we are young at heart. Sport keeps us socially, mentally and physically active.

In addition, sport is an important aspect of the work of the People's Association (PA), through the PA Wellness Programme. The PA's mission is 'to Build and To Bridge Communities in achieving One People, One Singapore'. It comprises a network of 1,800 grassroots organisations, five Community Development Councils, the National Youth Council, National Community Leadership Institute, Outward Bound Singapore and the Social Development Service. Through community centres, it offers diverse activities and courses at community clubs (CCs) to enable to the populace to maintain physical, mental and social health. Such activities include pickle ball, brisk-walking, yoga and taiji. Residents' Committee Centers and Wellness Centres as well as regional sports clubs are being asked to serve as platforms to generate more public awareness of these activities (for more information, see website in reference list). In a recent Straits Times article (January, 2014), the chairman of the PA Active Ageing Council stated:

Beyond regular health-screening sessions, we encourage seniors to follow through with the necessary corrective medical attention and also participate in community activities to keep physically and mentally healthy. When our grassroots volunteers come across seniors who require assistance, they will also offer the necessary support, such as providing suitable financial assistance and working with the right partners to meet seniors' needs.

It can therefore be observed that despite ageism permeating the functioning of the economy, the discourses used in the media and by the government associations in Singapore do not predominantly focus on the medical self to achieve *active ageing* but tend to equally promote the health of the mental and social self. This is a positive characteristic of the state ideological structure. Such notions reflect Gaullier's (2002) proposition for support through 'plural identities' in later life.

However, one must still ask whether there is a centrality of work which seeks to overshadow holistic ageing. In a very recent *Straits Times* article (March, 2014), Senior Minister of State, Heng Chee How said that unions, employers and the Government have agreed to work on extending the re-employment age of workers to 67 as well as improve workplace health practices to protect workers against premature loss of employability and employment. In addition, there is still a tendency for positivist data to be published which tends to evoke the sort of moral panic noted above. According to a Ministry of Social and Family Development

National Sports Participation Survey in the State of the Elderly (2009 is the latest available on the government's website), only about 38% of seniors in Singapore are regular sports participants, that is, those who participate at least once a week for a period of three months. Indeed, the majority (61%) are described as 'sedentary': those who seldom participate in sports or do not participate in any form of sports or physical exercise at all. In addition, according to the State of the Elderly (2009), 54.6% of the elderly in Singapore suffer from high blood pressure (Profile of Older Men and Women, 2011) and 62% do not exercise regularly.

What the seniors say

Positive attitudes towards exercise

Eight of the ten interviewees were aware of the importance of sport participation and conducted regular exercise, at least three times per week. They consider themselves moderately fit. One stated that she exercises at least five times a week for two to three hours each time. Another woman does qigong 'every single day.' Each of these seniors stated that sport helped them to sleep better, and to feel more energetic. One senior stated that she exercised to keep her weight down; another to improve the condition of an injured knee. He said:

I can sleep better and I experience less numbness in my limbs because of better blood circulation.

Walking, cycling and then swimming were selected as the main sports conducted. Two of the seniors play Pétanque.

Only one of the seniors, a housewife of 75 years of age, does not exercise at all due to her rheumatism. When asked if she thought some soft exercise might help the condition, she replied:

No, I am afraid of worsening the current condition of my leg if I exercise.

Knowledge of programmes at Community Centres

Two of the seniors are currently part of a Pétanque team from a community centre. Four of the ten seniors had not heard of a government campaign; two had heard of something but knew nothing about it; one seemed very familiar with the local programmes. She stated:

There are many sports available and older people take part every morning.

This senior continued:

I think the government is doing great. In Clementi, we have Zumba, which is very popular. It is good for older people to come out of their houses and make more friends.

One of the Pétanque team members stated that It is fun to be part of the Pétanque team, and meet with other people through sport. However, the use of the local sporting programmes amongst the seniors interviewed is relatively low.

Growing sporting activity in in local communities

One of the seniors involved in Pétanque stated that sport had grown quite considerably since the financial support from the Singapore Sport's *Learn to play* scheme was introduced and more Pétanque courts were built in various community centres. (There are now more than 60 courts in Singapore). Also, the Senior Pétanque Championship is held annually for serious

elderly Pétanque players to participate. Similarly, three seniors stated that sport participation amongst the elderly had grown in recent times. One stated:

From what I see, older people are already becoming more aware and are exercising more. For instance, when I go for my swim every week, I realise that more than half the swimmers are actually older people.

Therefore, despite a lack of knowledge about community programmes, it seems that the elderly in Singapore are taking more responsibility for their health through regular sporting activity. When interviewees were asked why they thought that more seniors were engaging in sport, all three remarked that it was needed to stay healthy.

Positive attitudes towards work

Four of the seven women are housewives. All of them spend some quality time every week looking after their grandchildren while their own children are at work. The other six seniors are working. One woman is a retired teacher who is currently a vendor in a primary school canteen; another is a kindergarten teacher; one woman is a cleaner; three men also work as cleaners. When asked if they would like to stop working, all of the interviewees stated that they were happy keeping active and that they would be bored if they stayed at home. Work for them is a way to remain connected to people in society and this is important.

Knowledge of ageing demographic in Singapore

Seven of the seniors were aware that the Singapore population is ageing although none of them were aware of details such as the expectancy that by 2030 a quarter of the population in Singapore will be over the age of 50. The other three did not know about this but did not appear surprised and said that the elderly can work until late in life so could be very useful.

DISCUSSION

From a study of the PAP policies and associated websites, it can be seen that terms such as mental, physical and social health are constantly associated together with regards to ageing. Thus, a healthy ageing process is not solely represented from a medical perspective, which reflects the original definition of active ageing set out by the WHO before this was overshadowed by the OECD. However, as reported, from the analyses made of the *Straits Times*, and the positivist expectations that the old person support ration will decrease to 2.1 by year 2030, already mentioned in the government White Paper (2013), it appears that there is some PAP political discourse that lends itself to Cohen's (2002)'s regulating discourse of *moral panic*. In another light, this discourse might also reflect the pragmatic nature of the PAP, and its response to the statistical figures presented.

In addition, it appears that the seniors are positive about maintaining their working lives in order to remain active and age harmoniously. Several gerontologists working in policy making (Estes et al, 2001; Guillemard and Jolivet, 2006; and Phillipson & Walker, 1987) have argued that the classic old-age retirement model retracts from the elderly's' human rights as it excludes them from society and forces them to relinquish independence. This ultimately disempowers seniors in society. Through work, old people interact with others and the material production processes and are therefore defined as contributors to the nation. Townsend (1986) argues that the institutionalisation of retirement is a social construct that condemns the aged to an existence of poverty whereas maintaining a working identity is anti-ageist as individuals retain their social status.

However, one caveat regarding the data about work from these interviews is that seniors might have been unwilling to admit that they needed to work to sustain them rather than working through choice. After all, the majority of interviewees are involved in jobs which albeit essential are very menial tasks. For the retired teacher, currently a vendor in a primary school canteen, this might be difficult. In this case, seniors could have been involved in 'impression management' (Goffman, 1959) during the interview. As Goffman (1959) posits, in situations such as these, actors construct identities to convey the appearance that they are involved in the appropriate social role and acting as they are required to do. Goffman (1959: 251) states:

... The very obligation and profitability of appearing always in a steady light, of being a socialized character, forces one to be the sort of person who is practiced in the ways of the stage.

Through the pressures that individuals face in social interaction, definitions of reality are constructed. Thus, interviewees might have been responding in the most appropriate way possible to the questions.

Another critical analysis might be that it is the political discourse of the PAP (as cited above) that moulds these seniors' embodied selves. From this perspective, the ideology of sport and active ageing may have been internalised to reinforce the dominance of the PAP and preserve the status quo in society (Dannefer, 1984). Healthy living is also a method of sustaining cheap labour (according to the study commissioned by the Government in November, 2012, entitled Adequacy of Singapore's Central Provident Fund Payouts: Income Replacement Rates of Entrant Workers Seniors"), the elderly earn about 20% less than they did when 25. Recently, Health Minister Gan Kim Yong's provided a speech about a new PAP action plan to improve the elderly's lifeworlds (reported in an article in the Straits Times, May 28, 2014) entitled: "Govt plan to engage public on ageing issues". This was examined in *Real Singapore: voices of average Singaporeans* and responded to:

Instead of nice sounding words like "from one of worry to one of celebration" and "to have their days filled with excitement" – shouldn't we be at least talking about or addressing the widespread age discrimination in Singapore that may have led to so many elderly Singaporeans working very long hours for very low pay?

It should be stated that the phenomenon of a drop in earnings of 20% is a common phenomenon observed also in the US, UK, Germany, Netherlands, Denmark and Sweden (Bosworth et al., 1999; and Mastrobuoni & Taddei, 2011).

Similarly, in an article reported on the website '*LittleSpeck*' (written by Seah Chiang Nee), it is stated that around 40% of the elderly working today are cleaners or are doing related menial work, where incomes are low (less than \$S1000 per month). The site quotes Rick Lim responding to a government backbencher's comments:

It's not that the elderly don't want to retire, many simply cannot afford to. It is therefore feasible that seniors are attempting, through 'impression management' during these interviews, to deal with the stigma of the subaltern. Goffman's (1963) theory of social stigma, states that in society, groups of individuals are mentally classified by others in undesirable stereotypical ways; this is referred to as *virtual social identity*. Goffman (1963:2) posits:

Society establishes the means of categorizing persons and the complement of attributes felt to be ordinary and natural for members of each of these categories. [...] When a

stranger comes into our presence, then, first appearances are likely to enable us to anticipate his category and attributes, his "social identity" [...]. We lean on these anticipations that we have, transforming them into normative expectations, into righteously presented demands.

In this way, it is possible that by arguing that they were ageing actively through work, seniors were counteracting this stigma.

These are, of course, only hypothetical musings. What is clear is that this is a contentious issue in Singapore. On the basis of the interviews conducted for this research, seniors find that regular participation in sporting activity is useful and part of the process of *successful ageing*. Nevertheless, one thing is clear from the data: as much as the government is attempting to enhance successful ageing as mental and social constructs in addition to the usual medical focus, it seems that the outreach of current measures is not effective enough. In the interviews conducted, six of the ten seniors were practically unaware of the government's effort in promoting sport participation through local community centre programmes. Solely one of the interviewees could elaborate on the plans or programmes in some detail. Additionally, one interviewee seemed to lack medical guidance with regards to her physical problem of rheumatism, sure that exercise would worsen this condition, rather than help her to cope. Existing measures are therefore not effectively reaching enough older people. *Sport Singapore* might need to collaborate more with Community Centres (CCs) in the neighbourhoods to help disseminate the programmes being developed.

Additionally, current measures encourage older people to engage in only one or two sports. Having spoken to the interviewee from the Clementi area, this researcher visited the website *OurCommunity.sg* (<http://www.ourcommunity.sg/>) to find out about the sporting activities offered by the Residents' Committee Centers and Wellness Centres there. The only sport activity provided is Hapkido, Hatha Yoga (elementary and intermediate levels) and Zumba. Sixty seven residents have attended Hapkido; 12,635, Yoga elementary; 5,415 Yoga intermediate; and 15,380 have attended Zumba. These are therefore very popular but it seems that a more diverse range of activities should be offered. It is recommended that training plans for older people should encompass a wide variety of sports and activities to maintain psychomotor skills (Meusel, 1984). Hatha yoga is an excellent form of balance exercise that requires stretching and thus improves flexibility helping to eliminate risk of falling (Council of Third Age, 2013); and Zumba is an excellent opportunity for the elderly to partake in aerobic activity to maintain the cardiovascular system. Epidemiological and clinical studies demonstrate that moderate, rhythmic and regular exercise of this kind has substantial benefits for all ages (Meusel, 1984; Waddington, 2000), particularly preventing illnesses such as osteoporosis, coronary diseases and diabetes, increasingly common among older people (Waddington, 2000). However, more team activities might increase social, spiritual and emotional wellness more effectively than these individualised sport forms. Older people tend to prefer to use sport as a platform to socialise, as well as derive pleasure and satisfaction (Meusel, 1984). In the process of building new relationships through sport, it is hoped that the elderly might be able to find new meanings and purposes in their lives as they age (Council of Third Age, 2013).

CONCLUSION

Waddington (2000) theorises that people assume that they control their lives without realising that many of their actions are based on moral imperatives set by society. In the context of this paper, it could be said that promoting sport participation among older people is necessary for

the economy. However, it appears that seniors are seeking wellness through sport and the exercise that they do as active workers. From the interview responses, this activity seems to act as part of their self-actualization as they experience the ageing process. Critics (Moulaert & Biggs, 2013) often argue that the lifecourse for an elderly person in such a situation consists merely of *more of the same* and is thus existentially barren. However, Ngiam (2005: 60–61) posits that in Asian countries with Confucianist cultures, self-care is essential, and if this proves impossible, the family and then community care are engaged. This is colloquially defined as the ‘many helping hands’ approach with these various sectors joining to offer a safety net for those in need. The state is responsible as a last resort. According to Rarick (2007: 26):

‘Confucius recognized that in order to build a nation, certain sacrifices would have to be made by the individual. Personal sacrifice in order to advance the interests of the nation is found in all Confucian societies, including China.’

The work of the seniors, seen in this light, is highly respected. In addition, with regards to the argument that working at retirement age is *more of the same*, one of the male Muslim seniors, when prompted, stated that every day of his life had always been the same: working during the week; going to religious education sessions in the evenings at the Mosque; and then cycling at the weekend with his family. Contrary to potential assumptions, the interviewee did not find this at all negative; he seemed very happy that he had been able to manage his life in this way.

It is clear that the elderly will be essential to Singapore’s future. If it is true that seniors in Singapore do have a strong Confucian work ethic, and thus are motivated in the continued drive of Singaporean development to be essential social actors, perhaps more information age successfully. The results from these interviews suggest that a broader sporting agenda accompanied by an effective publicity campaign that communicates these programmes to seniors would be beneficial. Further research will surely continue into the next decade to follow the lived experiences of seniors and the ageing dynamic in Singapore. It is hoped that analyses of both government discourse and the everyday lives of individuals will continue to provide in-depth understandings of this phenomenon.

References

- Asher, M. G., & Nandy, A. (2008). Singapore’s policy responses to ageing, inequality and poverty: An assessment. *International Social Security Review*, 61, 1-20.
- Bosworth, B., Burtless, G. & Steurele, E. (1999). *Lifetime Earnings Patterns, the Distribution of Future Social Security Benefits, and the Impact of Pension Reform*. The Center of Retirement Research at Boston College.
- Burchell, G., Gordon, C., & Miller, P. (1991). (Eds.). *The Foucault effect: Studies in governmentality*. Chicago, Illinois: University of Chicago Press.
- Cohen, S. (2002). *Folk Devils and Moral Panics: The Creation of the Mods and Rockers*. 3rd Edition. London: Routledge.
- Council of Third Age. (2013). Physical fitness for seniors part 1. Retrieved 24 October, 2013 from http://www.c3a.org.sg/Aboutus_process.do. Last accessed June 2014.
- Dannefer, D. (1984). Adult development and social theory: A paradigmatic reappraisal. *American Sociological Review*. 49, 100-116.
- Dean, M. (1999). *Governmentality: Power and Rule in Modern Society*. London: SAGE.
- Department of Statistics (2005). http://www.singstat.gov.sg/publications/publications_and_papers/GHS/ghrs1.html. Last accessed June 2014.

Department of Statistics (2013).

(http://www.singstat.gov.sg/publications/publications_and_papers/population_and_population_structure/population_trend.html). Last accessed June 2014.

Department of Statistics. (2013) Resident old-age support ratio. Retrieved October 29, 2013, from http://www.singstat.gov.sg/statistics/visualising_data/chart/Old_Age_Support_Ratio.html. Last accessed June 2014.

Estes, C. L. & Linkins, K. W.; & Binney, E. A. (1996). The Political Economy of Aging. In *Handbook of Aging and the Social Sciences*, 4th ed. Edited by R. H. Binstock and L. K. George, San Diego, Calif.: Academic Press. Pp. 346–361.

Estes, C.L. & Linkins, K. W., (2001). Critical Perspectives on Health and Aging. In Harrington, C. and Estes, C. L. (Eds.). *Health Policy*. Boston: Jones & Bartlett Publishers. Pp. 97-101.

Foucault, M. (1973). *The Birth of the Clinic: An Archaeology of Medical Perception*. London: Random House.

Foucault, M. (1977). *Discipline and punish: The birth of the prison*. New York: Pantheon Books.

Gaullier, X. (2002). Retraites, préretraites et temps de la vie. *Gérontologie ET société*. 102, 67–85.

Gilleard, C. & Higgs, P. (2007). The Third Age and the Baby Boomers: Two Approaches to the Social Structuring of Later Life. *International Journal of Ageing & Later Life*. 2, 13–30.

Goffman, E. (1959). *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh Social Sciences Research Centre; Harmondsworth: Penguin.

Goffman, E. (1963). *Stigma; notes on the management of spoiled identity*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J., Prentice-Hall.

Gubrium, J. F. (1986). *Oldtimers and Alzheimer's: The Descriptive Organization of Senility*. Greenwich, Conn.: JAI Press.

Guillemard, A. & Jolivet, A. (2006). "De l'emploi des seniors à la gestion des âges." *Problèmes politiques ET sociaux* 924, mai, 110.

Hammersley, M., & Atkinson, P. (1983). *Ethnography: Principles in Practice*. London: Tavistock.

Harkin, J. & Huber, J. (2004). *Eternal Youths: How the Baby Boomers are having their Time Again*. London: Demos.

Hazan, H. (1994). *Old Age: Constructions and Deconstructions*. Cambridge, U.K. Cambridge University Press, 1994.

Katz, S. (1996). *Disciplining Old Age: The Formation of Gerontological Knowledge*. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia.

Laliberte Rudman, D., & Molke, D. (2009). Forever productive: The discursive shaping of later life workers in contemporary Canadian newspapers. *Work*, 32, 377-389.

'Littlespeck' (<http://www.littlespeck.com/content/people/CTrendsPeople-070304.htm>). Last accessed June 2014.

Mastrobuoni, G. & Taddei, F. (2011). *Age before Beauty? Productivity and Work vs. Seniority and Early Retirement*. Center for Research on Pensions and Welfare Policies CeRP Working Paper, 120/11.

Merleau-Ponty, M. (1962). *Phenomenology of Perception*. London: Routledge Kegan Paul.

Meusel, H. (1984). Developing physical fitness for the elderly through sport and exercise. *British Journal of Sports Medicine*, 18, 1, 4-12.

Ministry of Social and Family Development. (2009) *State of the Elderly in Singapore*. Singapore: Ministry of Social and Family Development.

http://app.msf.gov.sg/Portals/0/Summary/research/State%20of%20the%20Elderly_Release%203.pdf). Last accessed June 2014.

Mirowsky, J. (1995). Age and the Sense of Control. *Social Psychology Quarterly* 58, 1, 31-43.

- Moulaert, T. & Paris, M. (2013). Social Policy on Ageing: The Case of "Active Ageing" as a Theatrical Metaphor. *International Journal of Social Science Studies*. 1, 2, 113-123.
- Moulaert, T. & Biggs, S. (2013). International and European policy on work and retirement: Reinventing critical perspectives on active ageing and mature subjectivity. *Human Relations*, 66, 1, 23-43.
- National Population and talent division White Paper.
(http://www.nptd.gov.sg/content/NPTD/news/_jcr_content/par_content/download_98/file.res/population-white-paper.pdf). Last accessed June 2014.
- Ngiam T. L., (2005). Population ageing in Singapore: The challenge of using the Central Provident Fund for retirement needs. In *Ageing Matters: European Policy Lessons from the East*. (Eds). J Doling, C Jones Finer and T Maltby. Adlershot: Ashgate.
- Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) entitled its global report on ageing: *Ageing and Employment Policies. Live Longer, Work Longer* (<http://www.oecd.org/newsroom/36511265.pdf>). Last accessed June 2014.
- Our Community. <http://www.ourcommunity.sg/>. Last accessed June, 2014.
- Pike, E. (2011). Sport and the (Re) Production of Knowledge and Power Relations within a Global "Agequake". *East Asian Sport Thoughts*. December, 2, 101-116.
- Phillipson, C., & Walker, A. (1987). The Case for a Critical Gerontology. In *Social Gerontology: New Directions*. Edited by S. Di Gregorio. London: Croom Helm. Pp. 1-15.
- Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong (2005).
(http://www.mfa.gov.sg/content/mfa/overseasmission/pretoria/press_statements_speeches/2005/200508/press_200508.html). Last accessed June, 2014.
- Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong.
(http://www.mfa.gov.sg/content/mfa/overseasmission/washington/newsroom/press_statements/2007/200708/press_200708_03.html). Last accessed June, 2014.
- Rail, G. and Harvey, J. (1995). Body at Work. *Sociology of Sport Journal*. 12, 2, 164-79.
- Rarick, C., A. (2007). Confucius on Management: Understanding Chinese Cultural Values and Managerial Practices. *Journal of International Management Studies*. 30, 7/8, 709 - 723.
- Real Singapore: voices of average Singaporeans* (<http://therealsingapore.com/content/national-action-plan-ageing-age-discrimination>). Last accessed June 2014.
- Rose, N. S. (1999) *Governing the Soul. The Shaping of the Private Self*. London: Free Association Books.
- Rowe, J.; Kahn, R. (1987). "Human aging: Usual and successful". *Science*, 237, 4811, 143-9.
- Roanova, J. (2010). Discourse of successful aging in *The Globe & Mail*: Insights from critical gerontology. *Journal of Aging Studies* 24, 4, 213-222.
- Singapore Council: *Active Singapore* <https://www.myactivesg.com/about-activesg>. Last accessed June 2014.
- Singapore Council of the Third Age (2014) http://www.c3a.org.sg/Aboutus_activeage.do?id=71. Last accessed June 2014.
- Straits Times, (January, 2014) <http://www.straitstimes.com/premium/forum-letters/story/programme-help-seniors-take-charge-their-health-20140127>). Last accessed June 2014.
- Teo, P. (2006). *Ageing in Singapore: Service needs and the state*. Routledge contemporary Southeast Asia series 10. GB: Routledge Ltd.
- The Real Singapore*: <http://therealsingapore.com/content/national-action-plan-ageing-age-discrimination>). Last accessed June, 2014.

Brooke, M. (2014). A Study of the Government and Media Discourse on Active Ageing in Singapore and its Effects on the Lived Experiences of Singapore Seniors. *Advances in Social Sciences Research Journal*, 1(7), 30-42

Townsend, P. (1986). Ageism and Social Policy. In: Phillipson C and Walker A. (Eds). *Ageing and Social Policy*. Aldershot: Gower, Pp. 15-44.

Vision 2030 (<http://www.vision2030.sg/topic/seniors/>). Last accessed June, 2014.

Waddington, I. (2000). Sport and health: A sociological perspective. In *Handbook of Sports Studies*. SAGE Publications Ltd.

Walker, A. (2006). *Active ageing in employment: Its meaning and potential*. *Asia-Pacific Review*, 13, 1, 78-93.

Wendell S (1996). *The Rejected Body: Feminist Philosophical Reflections on Disability*. New York, Routledge.

World Health Organization. (2002). *Active Ageing: A Policy Framework*. Geneva: World Health Organization.