

God, Culture, and Old Age: Social Constructions of Gerontological Experience in a Muslim Society

Ahmad Raza, Ashraf Khan Kayani, and Hasan Sohaib Murad
University of Punjab, Pakistan

Abstract

The paper explores the social constructions of “gerontological experience” in the context of Muslim society, particularly Pakistan. Old-age occupies a socially significant mode of collective experience through which social continuity of tradition as well as practice is communicated to the posterity. It is predominantly associated with wisdom, self-poise and benevolence in the general social experience of the society. The “old” is looked upon as the cultural repositories of knowledge, experience and historical connectivity. The “gerontological experience” is deeply embedded in the social structure of the family, wherein the process of “aging” is taken as natural and social given to be revered by the young ones and joyfully lived by the “old.” The social perception of being an “oldman” as a meaningful construct in the society is derived from the unique spiritual, ontological and historical symbolism of the society and its continued traditions of such forms of social legitimization. Finally the paper concludes with a contemporary redefinition of the “gerontological experience” amidst the emerging “technological” transformation currently experienced by the society and future shape of social recontextualization of the “old-age” facing new social scenarios.

Keywords: Gerontology, Pakistan, Islam, culture, old age.

Perspectives on Aging

The recent gerontological literature affords variety of perspectives on the nature of aging in human societies. Naftali Raz (2000) has investigated in detail the, “anatomical and physiological characteristics of the aging brain” and its varied consequences for the aged members of the society.

The scientific evidence sufficiently demonstrates the genetic and biological basis of aging process and its effect on memory, general behavior and social performance of the aging people in the later part of the lifespan (Prull *et al.*, 2000; Salthouse, 1991; Clark, 2002; Ben-Sira, 1991; Schaie, 1989). Their studies show that there exist strong biological and cognitive correlates to aging phenomenon in human beings. McClearn (2000) has further suggested that, “single major genes have identified whose associated phenotypes are describable as accelerated sene-

sance.” Psychological perspective captures another important dimension of aging agents in human societies.

This technique seeks to understand, “changes in behavior that characteristically occur after young adulthood. Behavior in this sense includes sensation, perception, learning, memory, intellect, motivation, emotion, personality, attitudes, motor movement, and social relationships” (Whitbourne, 1996; Glicksman, 2000).

Furthermore, Findlay and McLaughlin (2005) have remarked that psychological approach tries to investigate, “how older people respond via behavior, feelings and emotions to changes in their environment, a key mediating factor being the individual attributes of the older person” (cf e.g. also Ward *et al.*, 1988).

The relevance of psychological processes influencing the behavioral life of aging agents can be interpreted differently within the sub-cultural contexts as well as across human cultures. For example the images of older woman in the Western societies and elsewhere in the world vary sharply and contradict the dominant paradigms of mainstream gerontology.

The feminist critique of women by writers such as Colette Browne *et al.* (1998), Rhonda Nay (1999), and Margaret Sargent (1999) have clearly exposed the inadequacies of mainstream (in the words of Margaret Sargent, “malestream approaches to gerontology”) gerontological discourse of Western sociological thinking. Margaret Sargent (1999) has taken a critical view of this “malestream gerontology” and remarks on its effects in the following words:

“These effects include the devaluation of older women in the general social discourse and in government social policy toward women, the sexist and age related attitudes that accompany discriminatory behavior and the idea that there is something abnormal about being old that legitimizes a medical takeover of our lives and the medicalization of aging itself.”

This “objectvization” of aging people, particularly women, she claims to be the direct consequence of the “philosophy of *positivism*” (italics in original text) underlying and shaping much of the Western epistemological assumptions about the nature of natural world as well as social world. The feminist rejection of “scientist-observer” duality during the act of knowing and emphasis on the inevitable contextuality and constructivism of all human knowledge needs to be given due place in the new sociological discourse on aging, not only in West but elsewhere in the world (Sargent, 1999; Irigaray cited in Sargent, 1999; deBeauvoir cited in Frey Waxman, 1990).

The social interpretation of old age based on “binary oppositions of youth and age” needs to be dissolved and instead create, in the words of Barbara Frey Waxman (1990), more “positive associations with age and even a new space where age is no longer an element of identity: an ageless utopia.” She proposes a kind of, “reifungsroman, or fiction of ripening” to invent a new social discourse on old.

The “ageless utopia,” which Frey Waxman seeks through creating new meaningful old age social interpretations, is not going to emerge from some sort of

wonder medicine or a reprogrammed gene. It is to be reinterpreted and rediscovered by a new constructivist shift both in the perceptions as well as meanings of old age in human societies. Despite mainstream social negativity about the place and space of the older people in the society, there is a growing intellectual shift towards more enlightened forms of social gerontology and redefined social imagery of the old. Hareven (1995), for example speaks about the “changing images of aging and the social construction of lifecourse.” He further asserts that “the recognition of old age as a unique stage of life in the twentieth century is part of a larger historical process involving the emergence of new stages of life and their societal recognition.” Old age is not about defacing or bony and skeletal looks, weak muscle and eroding memory; it constitutes a “new stage” in a socially lived and situated life course.

Hareven (1995) concludes after Stanely Hall that rather than, “viewing old age as a period of decline and decay” one must look upon it as, “a stage of development in which passion of youth and the efforts of a life career had reached fruition and consolidation.” One’s philosophical reasons can always swing from “death twitches my ear” to longevity and “you must die,” but it is the ultimate picture of social life, which gives meaning, significance to and shapes our attitudes and responses to how we interpret and construct a picture of old age and aging agents in a broader networks of social relationships (Overall, 2003; Atwood, 1997; Nussbaum and Coupland, 2004; Hummert and Nussbaum, 2001; Haper, 2004). Human beings may not find the mythic “Spring of Youth,” but can always learn and live through the wisdom of the age(s) (Nussbaum and Coupland, 2004).

The social construction of old age, whether by “photographic images,” “linguistic changes,” “places and spaces of uses and social interaction of aging agents with younger people of the society” or the “communication and emotions;” all are rooted in the peculiar cultural assumptions and sociological interpretations of the culture (Bytheway and Johnson, 2005; Andrews and Philips, 2005; Hepworth, 1998, 2004; Nussbaum and Coupland, 2004; Shore, 1996, Shenk, 1994).

Therefore, a strict “positivistic” and universalistic description of gerontological experience might be liable to conceptual as well as cultural limitations. This inevitably leads one to explore the experience of aging in a “multidimensional” context of disciplinary inquiries (Kontos, 2005). Kontos therefore seeks “multi-disciplinary configurations in gerontology” and outlines the theoretical framework of such a quest in the following words:

“It is now argued that the myriad personal, existential, cultural and political issues involved in aging, as well as the plural and contradictory and enigmatic meanings of aging, require the pioneering efforts of those who cross disciplinary boundaries and engage in multiple areas of knowledge production” (Kontos, 2005: 24).

The “multidimensional” understanding of gerontological experience assumes further significance due to peculiar policy implications arising out of the po-

litical economy of aging as well as ethical considerations relating to older members of the society (cf e.g. Achenbaum, 1999; Olson, 1982).

The social concerns regarding well being, care and integration of the older people are closely connected with not only socially constructed imagery of old in different cultures but are also influenced by the changing views on aging agents (Cohler *et al.*, 1996; Glicksman, 2000). The concepts such as “life course,” “life-span,” “successful aging” and “positive aging” are all indicators of emerging alternatives on social interpretations of aging agents in a new sociological perspective (Ward *et al.*, 1988; McKay and Caverly, 2004; Minichiello and Coulson, 2005). These perspectives guide the new social inquires on aging agents questioning the earlier scientific and quantitative models of aging (McKay and Caverly, 2004).

Old age constitutes a mark of “social identity” related to particular social time-space of gerontological experience (Woodward, 2003; Evans, 2003; Jenkins, 2004; Paoletti, 1998; Holliday, 2004). In addition to this, aging experience must be interpreted keeping in view the peculiar social and cultural underpinnings of diverse human societies. There are studies which indicate the growing significance of “social support,” “social networks,” “communities,” and “extended families” in maintaining a useful old age existence (Philipson *et al.*, 2000; Lang, 2004).

This also illustrates how sociological discourse on aging is shifting towards authentic and genuine concerns regarding older people particularly woman both in their private and public lives (Bernard and Val Harding, 2000). This new social discourse on aging experience is further augmented by the works of writers like, Featherstone and Wernick (1995), Fozard (2005) and Cheta (2004), who reinterpret and redefine the aging “bodies” as well as aging experience in the context of technological advancements and their increased impact on the collective lives of the older people in the modern world.

Culture and Social Construction of Aging in a Muslim Society

Stark (1956), Mannheim (1956), Geertz (2000, 2005), Kempny and Burszta (1994) and Rapport and Overing (2000) have underscored the significance of culture both as a predictor and shaper of human behavior, notwithstanding its peculiar “politicized” connotations. Human beings as members of their respective societies are deeply driven by its cultural notions.

Attitudes, worldviews, interpersonal relationships, marriages and rituals, modes of exchanges and symbolism; all are reflection of the collective human experience over a long period of time and termed as culture. It lends diversity and multiplicity to human experience. It affords legitimacy and meaningfulness to human actions. It explains in significant ways the uniqueness of human experiences in different contexts.

The meaningfulness of human societies might loose much of its specific attributes, if deprived of culture. From American base ball to Balinese cock fighting to Muslim annual pilgrimage to Makkah; all these social action are embedded

in a unique culture rooted in historical niche (Geertz, 2005; Shariati, 1981; Iqbal, 1983).

This plurality and multiplicity demands that, one should look for justificatory rationalities of a unique cultural description within that culture, abandoning the universal quest for general explanation of social reality based on Enlightenment rationality and objectivity and instead explain and understand the former as a, “contextualized knowledge which emphasizes localized, restricted narratives and stories,” legitimizing the structure of a given culture or social reality (Chriss, 1999).

These justificatory rationalities of a culture are further substantiated by the unique metaphors and symbols of human groups in which their collective social experiences are then completely embodied (Lee and Poynton, 2000; Coupland, 2004). The social description, imagery and linguistic symbolism of aging agents across diverse human cultures constitute one such type of collective experience.

Each human culture, in some profound way is shaped by some essential referential “text”(s) (Lee and Poynton, 2000; Coupland, 2004). These texts reembody in a unique sign system—a language. The words and concepts which different languages employ tell us much about the way; members of a particular culture describe social reality for themselves. For example, the works of Descartes, Kant and Hegel evoke a unique cultural imagery before the eyes of a person, trying to interpret the intricacies of Western culture. For Japanese, Zen and its concepts may be most relevant to interpret the social world. For Hindus, sacred Vedas constitute the bedrock of their social and historical existence. For Christian and Jews, Old Testament and Bible, lay down the social prescriptions for them.

For a Muslim, it is the Quran and the Sayings of their Prophet, which interpret the social reality for them. The language of the Quran is Arabic, and permeates the cultural worlds of diverse Muslim societies from the North Africa down to Middle East, Asia and rest of the Muslim Diasporas in Europe, North America, Russia, China and Japan. According to Muslim cultural tradition, God spoke to the mankind through the words of Quran. Therefore, God and the concepts and rules which he prescribes for human beings constitute the grounds of the Muslim society any where.

For example everyday social interactions of members of the society are shaped and rooted in words such as; *Inshaallah* (God willing), *Mashaallah* (God wills whatsoever) and *Alhamidoolillah* (Praise be to God for his bounties), *Allahho Akbar* (God is great), *Laillahailallah* (There in none worthy of worship but God). Both social actions and social thoughts are driven by a profound conviction in a merciful and omniscient God. Outward behavior and implicit beliefs; all are rooted in one’s unique relationship with and awareness of that with the God. The outcomes of decisions, success and failures, prosperity and poverty are inextricably linked with his degree of conviction in God’s presence in the social reality (every day social interaction and beyond that).

This structuring of both outward social behavior and inward convictions are derived from a Quranic verse, in which God communicates to the people and states that, “*Ana nahnun aqrab min hablil wareed*” (I am nearest to you than your jugular

vein). It is a presence felt in all social actions and consequently a general category of social interactions among the human beings, determining their everyday social exchanges and social attitudes in family, with peers, in business and across people of other cultures.

Ruf (1997) and Eisenhandler and Thomas (1994) have discussed and analyzed the role of religion in the construction of identity of “self” as well as aging. As asserted by Eisenhandler and Thomas (1994) due to peculiar cultural assumptions rooted in Kantian texts; the terms “God” and “spiritual” have been purged from the social science discourse. Therefore, it is no wonder that, they further state that “Journal of Gerontology and Gerontologist (the two major publications of Gerontological Society of America) from their founding up to the present decade, published only twenty three articles which focused centrally on aging and religion.”

They, therefore propose that a “human science paradigm “be pursued to integrate the meaningfulness of religion both for the individuals as well as the social categories such as aging etc. The current social science discourse need to appreciate the cultural particularities of eastern societies in general and Muslim societies in particular. For example, Shenk (1994) has explored the “aging experience” of Jewish women in “terms of biblical and Talmudic traditions of respecting the aged and honoring ones’ parents,” in the context of American Jewish families.

Palmore (1975) has reported on how older and aged Japanese are respected in their families. The aged performs very valuable services in the domestic life. The younger generation is bound by cultural tradition of *Oyakoko* (filial duty to parents) to respect and honor their parents. The respect for elderly parents is also reflected in the Japanese’s sociolinguistic discourse while describing relationships with the elderly and aged parents. Somewhat similar cultural linguistic prevails in Pakistani society while addressing an elderly or aged person. The word “*Aap*” (very difficult to translate in English) is used to describe an honorific relationship with elderly and the respectable.

Then there are words such as *Baba Jee* (means an older person as well as seasoned and wise old man who can provide guidance to the younger generation). Older women are addressed as *Amah Jee* or *Mai Jee*; a word again very difficult to render in English, but it shows extreme respect and dignity to the women and her cultural capacity to guide and advise the younger members of the society.

There are two other key social concepts, without which a reasonable picture of aging in the Muslim society can not be constructed. These are “*Dadake*” (extended social network of kinship ties from the father and grandfather side) and “*Nanake*” (extended social network of kinship ties from the mother and maternal grandmother side).

There was a time (roughly at the beginning of 20th century and before that) when *Dadake* and *Nanake* included all the brothers and sisters on the respective sides and they lived and resided together in a village or nearby suburb, town or may

be a city. This social aspect of family organization has now significantly undergone a social transformation due to industrialization and urbanization.

Now the *dadake* and *nanake* include only the grandfather and grandmothers on both side's and their sons and daughters. They have now become a joint family, instead of a larger extended joint family. It is within the social network of *dadake* and *nanake* that social centerpiece of the elderly is defined and their aged lives are spent. The different social identities of the older persons both men and women such as retired civil servant, army officer, teacher, doctor or engineer; all are submerged in some penultimate social sense into the social roles of *Dada* (paternal grandfather) and *Nana* (maternal grandfather), *Dadi* (paternal grandmother) and *Nani* (maternal grandmother). The extended family and kinship ties play a crucial role in defining the integral social space and place for the old people in the Pakistani society.

As Lang (2004), Philipson, Bernard, Philips, and Ogg (2000) have indicated in their respective studies of aging that “extended family networks” and “social support networks of the community play an important role in shaping the lives of the aging agents. This fact is most forcefully attested in the lives of older people in the Muslim perspective, wherein much of the joint family systems are still intact and *Dada*, *bap* and *pota* (Grandfather, father and grandson) still live together to constitute a meaningful social reality based on shared values and traditions.

Dadake and *nanake* play a significant social role not only in defining the social identity of the younger ones but also influence the decision-making processes about marriages, businesses, politics, careers and jobs for the younger generations. *Dada/dadi* as well as *Nana/nani* share the experiences of their lifetime's successes and failures through “narratives and stories,” relying mostly on their “memory” and “narrative” skills (Leichtman *et al.*, 2003; Fivush and Haden, 2003). The spiritual guidance and worldly wisdom of the older people is reciprocated in social virtues of care, respect and reverence by the younger members of the society. In the joint and extended family networks, older people are taken care, while the younger ones are handed out the wisdom to lead an effective life in this world.

Now, let us see what Quran—the cultural “text “of the Muslim society— has to say about the elderly and aged people.

Al-Hajj [22:5] (The Pilgrimage)

22:5. O mankind! if ye have a doubt about the Resurrection, (consider) that We created you out of dust, then out of sperm, then out of a leech-like clot, then out of a morsel of flesh, partly formed and partly unformed, in order that We may manifest (our power) to you; and We cause whom We will to rest in the wombs for an appointed term, then do We bring you out as babes, then (foster you) that ye may reach your age of full strength; and some of you are called to die, and some are sent back to the feeblest OLD AGE, so that they know nothing after having known (much), and (further), thou seest the earth barren and lifeless, but

when We pour down rain on it, it is stirred (to life), it swells, and it puts forth every kind of beautiful growth (in pairs).

These verses provide what might be termed as a “natural model” of human aging. God clearly states the observable course of life and the transformations experienced by each individual during this process. These verses underscore the biological fact of creation to physiological changes during childhood, adulthood, manhood and finally the old age. It clearly refers to behavioral changes experienced by the human agents at each stage of their life. The person as a child is dependent on parents for nourishment and protection. As one grows to adulthood, one becomes stronger and more rational and autonomous in outwards social interactions.

The development in human capacities keeps growing till they matures into old age and one starts losing grip on ones’ faculties such as memory, motor actions and other related matters. All these physiological and natural transformations during the life course of a person are experienced within the social networks of extended and joint family systems. Therefore old age is taken as natural fact of human existence and perceived to be a time for the final journey towards God.

Therefore most of the time of the older persons is spent on seeking Lord’s mercy in the hereafter, asking forgiveness for sins, offering obligatory prayers, spiritual mediations and performing good deeds for the family and community in which they live and guiding and counseling the younger generation about their life paths, which they have yet to travel. For someone reared and bred in a rational social system, where Kant, Hegel and Descartes provide the guiding principles of life, it would be very difficult to imagine a social organization so deeply steeped in spiritual and metaphysical beliefs. This diversity is the consequence of varied human cultures across the world.

In another verse, God enjoins upon the Muslims to respect and love their older parents and show them utmost reverence and love. This verse provides a sociological insight which constitutes the cornerstone of Muslim social and family organization. The verse from the Quran is reproduced below.

Al-Isra (The Journey by Night)

17:23 For thy Sustainer has ordained that you shall worship none but Him. And do good unto [thy] parents. Should one of them, or both, attain to old age in thy care, never say "Ugh" to them or scold them, but [always] speak unto them with reverent speech. This verse along with the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad that “Respect thy elders and show compassion to the younger ones’ leaves not the social consciousness of the Muslim children as they grow and move forward in life to take up practical roles of parenthood, employees and doctors and engineers. Muslims are socially duty bound to take care of their old age people and show them the utmost “*adab*” (reverence) in their later days.

Apart from religious duty of the younger ones to respect and show reverence to their older; the emotion of reverence also stems from the social role played by the old for the proper upbringing of the young ones. *Dada/dadi* or *nana/nani*, transmit their peculiar cultural values on life, morality, politics, leadership, financial well being, social responsibility to the larger Muslim social organization through their personal narratives and stories, which they have partly acquired from their parents and partly through the turmoil and travails of the social experiences. They would educate the younger people by sharing their knowledge on religion, history, culture and literature.

Some of the favorite stories told by the older persons are; the story of the migration of the prophet Muhammad from Makkah to Medina, the story of the prophet Moses and Pharaoh of Egypt, the story of the King David and his son Solomon, the story of the night journey of the prophet Muhammad to Heavens, the political story of how British took over the Mughal empire in India and how Muslim fought for their freedom, the story of Salahuddin and his victory in the Crusades, the story of Adam and Eve and how they were moved out of Garden of Eden, the story of Abel and Cain and their duel. There are other stories which train the minds of the young ones in matters of spirituality and morality, drawn heavily from the *Mathnavi* of Mevelna Jalal-uddin Rumi and *Gulistan* of Sheikh Saadi of Persia.

Then there are stories about the spiritual and miraculous roles of the Muslim Sufis across the Muslim societies. Then their career stories and other emotional and juvenile sojourns, successes and failures in life. Then there are stories about wars and different kinds of animal stories, which again shape up the cultural and attitudinal world of the younger ones. Then there are stories touching on the emotional and sensual side of life, such as *Heer-Ranjah*, *Sassi-Punnoo*, *Lyla-Majnoon* and *Sohni-Mahiwal* (roughly local variants of Romeo and Juliet, but significantly different in cultural sensibilities).

The social care and respect accorded to the aging people in the Muslim social organization is deeply rooted in the religious faith and is found across the Muslim social organization globally, despite various regional and geographical differences in the constitutions of the Muslims states and societies. The state policy on aging people in Brunei Darussalam is closely interlinked with the faith system of the society (Cleary and Ali Maricar, 2000). Elsewhere, in Malaysia, older Muslim population is taken care and given due respect due to Muslim belief system (Chang and Sor Tho, 2000).

Lang (2004), McKay and Caverly (2004), and Philipson, Bernard, Philips, and Ogg (2000) have elaborated upon the role of "kinship ties in later life," "relationships between grandparents and grandchildren" and role of communities as "social support for the older people in the Western context. In the Muslim social organization of family in Pakistan, extended family kinship ties play a very important role on structuring the functions of older persons in the society. The social relationships of the older and younger people are driven by mutually

obligatory social reciprocity enjoined by the teachings of Quran and the Prophet of Islam (cf e.g. Shariti, 1981).

The whole social organization is shaped by the God-consciousness and deeper spiritual and religious duties to respect the elderly and older persons and show compassion and love to the younger ones. Older persons can be spiritual guides (*murshids*, in local language) as well as teachers (*ustad*, in local idiom) to the younger generations within the joint and extended families and beyond that, to live peaceful and successful lives within the laid ethical frameworks of the Muslim social organization.

Currently, role transitions are being experienced by the older persons in big cities like Islamabad, Lahore and Karachi, due to peculiar economic and technological changes of family social organization, and “old homes” have sprung up in certain localities, but the predominant social legitimacy of the older persons still remain deeply rooted within the extended and joint family social organization and they lead a well integrated and meaningful last life phase with their sons, daughters and grandsons and grandchildren.

Reflections on Aging; Some Concluding Remarks

There was an old Zen master who lived and meditated along with his many disciples in a far off monastery in Japan. After usual meditations and mantra recitations in the morning, he would then work in the garden of the monastery side by side his students. One day his students while working in the garden counseled with each other and decided that our master has gone old and suffer physical hardship while laboring in the garden.

All of them agree that to relieve him of his suffering and pain, his garden implements be hid somewhere in the monastery and thus save him of unnecessary labor along with the students. They did this. Next morning, after usual spiritual meditations, when master looked for his garden implements, he found them missing from his meditation chambers. He was aghast on his stolen garden implements and went out into the monastery garden beholding his disciples work all day there. His students in the meantime were very happy that they have relieved their erstwhile master of great physical labor and pain. The master did not speak with any one and kept quite the whole day, roaming hither and thither in the garden.

After sunset when all the work was over and everybody assembled in the main hall of the monastery to take the evening supper. The food was served by the relevant students to everyone present in the hall, including the master. Everyone started eating except the master. Some of his students approached him and asked, “Why aren’t you eating master” to which his replied, “No work, no food.” The students felt sorry for what they did and put back his garden implements in his meditation chambers during midnight. Next day the master was happily working along with the disciples in the monastery garden. Everyone was very happy on this sight (Paul Reps, *Zen Flesh, Zen Bones*, 1982).

The punch line of this Zen story is: older persons have a significant role to play in the life and the people around them. They carry within their self's profound knowledge and lifetime of experiences. Being old does not imply ineffectiveness or uselessness and old-age itself constitute a force of relevance and meaningfulness in the general social structure of the society. Are contemporary societies reasonably responding to this social meaningfulness of the older persons in their scheme of things?

Two social factors are greatly impacting the lives of the older person in different fashions. These are a) technological innovations and b), erosion of meaningful set of values. Technological innovations have significantly transformed the pre-industrial social systems, particularly in Western Europe, North America and elsewhere in the world causing them to respond to the ever increasing complexities of urban life and hence the social questioning of sustainability of a growing older segment of the population (cf e.g. Espenshade and Braun, 1983).

The search for the economic justification of sustaining an older population has caused these societies to medicalize the meaningful part of the society (cf e.g. Jackson, 2001) and thus deprive them of their valuable insight and knowledge. The social policy parameters in the West and elsewhere need to be redefined in the light of existential usefulness of older persons in the society.

The new gerontological discourse can learn a lot from the deep historical wisdoms of different cultures across the globe. Any global social policy as well as theory formulation on aging must consider the inherent cultural diversity and the set of values underlying each one of them. That even holds within the social matrix of a single society.

Nonetheless, the diverse set of values must be brought into the core sociological discourse as well as policy documents of social institutions and social research in general. Particularly sociological insights must unravel the mystery of diverse values set underlying the role descriptions for older persons in different cultures.

The debate on aging agents need to responds to the humanistic implications as well as social meaningfulness of older persons in the general social structure of the society. The older persons are more than social objects for cosmetological relevance for consumerism and marketing mentality of the beauty corporations. They carry within their older bodies' rich repositories of knowledge, experience and wisdom upon which the edifice of a safe and secure global society can be built.

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