



News and Ideas from the
**Harvard Center for Population and
Development Studies**

BOW STREET BULLETIN

www.hsph.harvard.edu/cpds • Spring/Summer 2015

Sloan Foundation funds “Fellowship on Aging and Work”

New postdoctoral training program will address challenges of an aging labor pool

In recognition of the growing challenges arising from the United States’ aging population, the Harvard Center for Population and Development Studies (Pop Center) has created the “Sloan Fellowship on Aging and Work” postdoctoral training program. Made possible by a grant from the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, the Center will host and support five fellows over a three-year period, beginning in September 2016. With resources, infrastructure, and faculty

approach will help us understand the implications of employment patterns, obstacles to employment, and the ensuing economic impact.”

What an aging labor pool means

Since the 1950s, the U.S. has seen a ten-year increase in life expectancy at birth. The life expectancy for those who live to age 65 has also increased since the 1950s—from 12.7 years to 15.3 years for men, and from 14.7 years to 19.6 years for women.

On the surface, the news that people are living longer appears to be positive and uncomplicated. But the reality of these demographic changes means that the concepts of retirement and working into older ages will need to evolve to meet the needs of both employers and employees.

An aging work force has resulted in other important issues, such as changes in labor force participation for women, a factor that dramatically shifts family

adapt work, labor force participation, and retirement to these diverse needs.

With the complex issues associated with an older work force comes the need for new workplace practices that support the health and economic well-being of workers and encourages them to remain in the labor force. Such practices could include part-time hours, increasing control over schedules, attention to the way that responsibilities are allocated, and the development of incentives for employers to offer more flexible employment models.

An interdisciplinary approach

Addressing the challenges of an aging society requires identifying and understanding the demographic conditions that will create opportunities for the U.S. population to work longer and lead healthier lives, and for employers to develop adaptive and resilient policies in response to these demographic changes.

To date, economists have tackled some of these issues, but their main focus has been

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mentorship from numerous Harvard schools and departments, the fellows will conduct self-directed, interdisciplinary research into critical issues related to aging and the work force.

“At the Sloan Foundation, we are working to cultivate the next generation of exceptional scholars interested in the aging work force,” says Kathleen Christensen, program director, Alfred P. Sloan Foundation. “This multidisciplinary

dynamics (e.g., the rise of single parenthood, caretaking responsibilities, and divorce). Another complicating factor is the increasing divide between social classes that the United States has experienced over recent decades. Those in the upper classes are remaining employed and married more than those in lower and working classes, where unemployment and single parenthood continue to rise. This inequality has created an urgent need to determine how to optimally

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Aging and work fellowship, *continued from page 1*

on matters related to pensions and retirement. Understanding the full impact—particularly in terms of labor practices and policies—will require the type of interdisciplinary effort from experts in public health, business, law, economics, and other social sciences. This is a cornerstone of the new Sloan Fellowship Program. Some of the crucial, nuanced areas that will be explored include:

■ Evaluating lifecourse impacts on older workers to understand the ability of older workers to physically and mentally continue to work late in life. The goal is to shape patterns of employment, educational training, and work-family balance that are compatible with a longer work-life trajectory.

■ Identifying and assessing the policies and practices of employers at the local and state level to determine their impact on the capacity and opportunities for older workers to continue in the labor force. This will include consideration of the erroneous stereotypes through which many employers view older workers (i.e., older workers resist change or lack the drive to innovate).

■ Determining the multiple trajectories necessary for older workers to remain employed longer and experience a successful retirement. Efforts to retain older workers will be critical, but so will addressing the needs of those who are no longer able to be productive in the work force. Recognizing the existences of multiple work-life trajectories will lead to the identification of different strategies for engaging older workers.

The launch of the program

Expectations are that the research derived from the fellowship will be used to support improved workplace policies, as well as increase the public's understanding of aging and labor force challenges. The Sloan Fellows will be required to produce at least one peer-reviewed paper during their tenure and present their work at major conferences. The Pop Center will also begin hosting a new seminar series on "Aging and Work" that will provide fellows and faculty members with the opportunity to participate in interdisciplinary exchange, explore new

and relevant debates, train in research and analytical methods, and review and critique work in progress.

The Sloan Fellowship program will be led by Harvard Pop Center Director Lisa Berkman and an executive committee of distinguished faculty from across Harvard University, including: David Canning, associate director of the Pop Center; Mauricio Avendano, principal research fellow, London School of Economics Centre for Health and Social Care, and faculty member at the Pop Center; Jason Beckfield, professor of Sociology; David Cutler, Otto Eckstein Professor of Applied Economics; Frank Dobbin, professor of Sociology; David Laibson, Robert I. Goldman Professor of Economics; and Gloria Sorensen, professor of Social and Behavioral Sciences. Executive committee members will also serve as mentors, with others slated to be engaged from the Harvard Business School and Harvard Law School.

As with all the Center's postdoctoral training programs, a structured learning environment will be created so fellows come to appreciate the perspectives and methods of other social science disciplines beyond their own. The most important means to achieving this is through sound mentorship. Postdoctoral fellows are matched, at a minimum, to a mentor from their "home" discipline, as well as to one or more from a "stretch" discipline. The development of leadership skills is also emphasized, as is media relations.

Recruitment for postdoctoral fellows will begin in earnest this coming September, with the first cohort starting at the Pop Center in the fall of 2016. ■

**Applications for both the
Sloan Fellowship in
Aging and Work and the
David E. Bell Fellowship will
be accepted between
September 1, 2015 and
November 30, 2015.**

**Visit www.hsph.harvard.edu/cpds
for details.**

News briefs:

Below is a sampling of the recent activities of Pop Center faculty, fellows, affiliates, and staff.

Announcements:

The Inaugural Forum on Population Health Equity at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health will take place on September 10–11, 2015. The event, which will be held at the Martin Conference Center in the Longwood Medical Area, will feature an array of international speakers.

Awards:

■ Harvard Pop Center faculty member and director of the Program on the Global Demography of Aging (PGDA) **David E. Bloom** was named one of 32 inaugural Andrew Carnegie Fellows. This newly established fellowship supports scholarly work in the areas of social sciences and humanities, and can enable recipients to devote between one to two years to research

■ Harvard Pop Center faculty member **Nancy Krieger** has received the prestigious American Cancer Society Clinical Research



Professor Award for her contributions to cancer research. Krieger works to challenge the mainstream approach to social inequalities in cancer, with the goal of

establishing a sound scientific basis for the elimination of these inequalities.

■ **Michael R. Reich**, Harvard Pop Center faculty member and former director, has been named to the Japanese Government's Spring Honor List as the recipient of The Order of the Rising Sun, Gold Rays with Neck Ribbon, for helping to promote Japan's global health policy and advancing public health in the country.

Moving On:

■ **Mariana Arcaya**, current Yerby Fellow, joins MIT as assistant professor of Urban Planning and Public Health at MIT in September.

■ Current RWJF Health & Society Scholar **Adam Lippert** will join University of Colorado, Denver, as assistant professor of Sociology in the fall.

■ This fall, **Mark McGovern**, current PGDA Fellow, will become a lecturer in Economics, Queen's University Belfast.

■ Current RWJF Health & Society Scholar **Selena Ortiz** moves to Penn State this fall to become assistant professor in the department of Health Policy and Administration.

■ Current Bell Fellow **Fahad Razak** returns to the University of Toronto and the St. Michael's Hospital, where he is an attending physician and research scholar.

■ **J.M. Ian Salas**, current Bell Fellow, will become an assistant scientist in the Department of Population, Family, and Reproductive Health at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health this fall.

■ **Jessica Williams**, current RWJF Health & Society Scholar, has accepted a position as assistant professor, Department of Health Policy and Management, School of Medicine, University of Kansas Medical Center.

■ Pop Center Researcher **Laura Yasaitis** will join the Health Policy Division, Perelman School of Medicine, University of Pennsylvania, as a postdoctoral fellow this fall.

New Harvard Pop Center faculty members:

■ **Mauricio Avendano**, PhD, principal research fellow & deputy director of LSE Health, London School of Economics; adjunct associate professor, Department of Social and Behavioral Sciences, Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health.

■ **Mary C. Brinton**, PhD, Reischauer Institute Professor of Sociology; Chair, Department of Sociology, Harvard University.

■ **Jessica L. Cohen**, PhD, assistant professor of Global Health, Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health.

■ **Jorge Dominguez**, PhD, Antonio Madero Professor for the Study of Mexico; vice provost for International Affairs at Harvard University; and chairman of the Harvard Academy for International and Area Studies.

■ **Filiz Garip**, PhD, associate professor of Sociology, Harvard University.

■ **Ashish Jha**, MD, K.T. Li Professor of Health Policy, Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health; director of the Harvard Global Health Institute; and physician at the VA Boston Healthcare System.

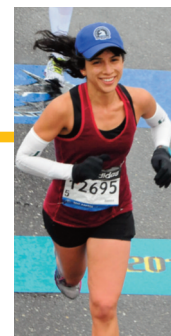
■ **David Laibson**, PhD, Robert I. Goldman Professor of Economics, Harvard University.

■ **Cindy H. Liu**, PhD, director of multi-cultural research, Commonwealth Research Center, Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center; and instructor in Psychiatry, Harvard Medical School.

■ **Mario L. Small**, PhD, Grafstein Family Professor of Sociology, Harvard University.

■ **Atheendar S. Venkataramani**, MD, PhD, instructor in Medicine (Starting July 2015), Division of General Internal Medicine, Department of Medicine, Massachusetts General Hospital, Harvard Medical School.

■ **Michelle A. Williams**, ScD, Stephen B. Kay Professor of Public Health, and chair, Department of Epidemiology, Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health.



Aditi Krishna, a doctoral student at the Harvard Pop

Center, looks strong at the half-way point of the Boston Marathon, which took place April 20. It was her first time running in Boston and her best marathon time yet at 3:09:54

Congratulations, Aditi!

Study finds link between paid maternity leave and mental health

According to a study of European women, paid maternity leave following the birth of a first child appears to have positive benefits on women's mental health later in life. The findings were published in the May 2015 issue in *Social Science & Medicine*, and co-authored by **Mauricio Avendano**, Pop Center faculty member and former Bell Fellow, **Giacomo Pasini**, Pop Center visiting scientist, and **Lisa Berkman**, Harvard Pop Center director. Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health senior writer Marge Dwyer, interviewed Berkman on the study. Excerpts from that are reprinted below:

Q: How did you become interested in the connection between maternity leave and health?

We know that life expectancy for U.S. women has not kept pace with that of women in many European countries. This wasn't true 30 or 50 years ago. We used to rank in the middle of these countries, but other OECD countries have overtaken us. Life expectancy for women in the U.S. now is 81 compared to 85 in France or 86 in Japan. We speculated that stresses associated with lack of social protection, such as maternity leave, when coupled with high labor force participation among women with children, would lead to poorer health in American women. We wanted to know if having paid maternity leave would reduce work-life challenges in early adulthood and, ultimately, make a difference in women's mental health in later adulthood.

Q: Is trouble brewing down the road for older adults in the U.S.?

It occurred to us that the U.S. has the perfect storm for a shortened life expectancy for women. We have a large number of women working; over 70% of women with young children are in the labor force today. American women have more stable fertility rates and often have more children than women in many European countries, and many American women are missing paid maternity benefits. Since 1960, many European countries have adopted policies that provide paid maternity leave benefits to working women, while U.S. women

have only the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993, which provides employees with job protection and unpaid leave for the birth of a child and other family reasons. We hypothesized that the strains of being in the work force along with family responsibilities is stressful in the absence of social protection policies.

For our study, we looked at data on the work and family history and maternity benefits for women aged 50 years and older from 13 European countries who participated in the SHARE (Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe) study. We assessed whether having three months of paid maternity leave would impact later life mental health. We thought depression would be important to look at because there's an increased burden of depression in old age. We hypothesized that the lack of paid maternity leave might have long term or "scarring" effects as people get older. While the analytic approach we used is complex, the bottom line is not: women with several months of maternity benefits with full wages were 16.2% less likely to be depressed than women without paid maternity leave.

Q: What are your thoughts on why women who don't receive maternity leave benefits would be more prone to depression?

A period of leave shortly after birth may improve mother-child relationships, which may in turn improve maternal well-being in older age. Women with prior episodes of depression are more likely to experience divorce and marital difficulties. Maternity leave benefits may also influence employment and lifetime earnings, which may generate positive outcomes, including stable pensions and lead to better late-life mental health.

One can imagine that it must feel good for a mother to know that she is financially secure and can take time off and bond with a baby and have a job. The idea that this would have an impact 30 years later is amazing. As you're raising children it's not just the three months that are important; it's setting in motion something that will last over the rest of your life, long after the maternity leave benefit has disappeared. ■



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