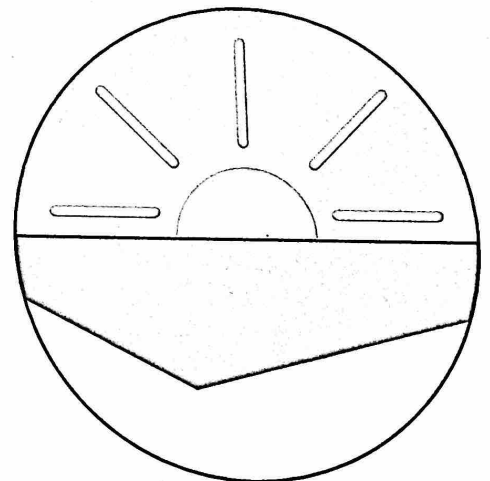
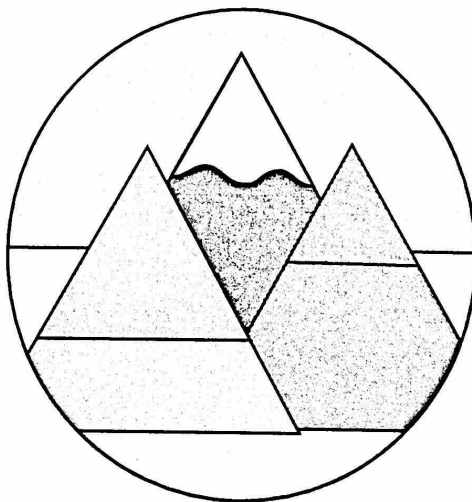
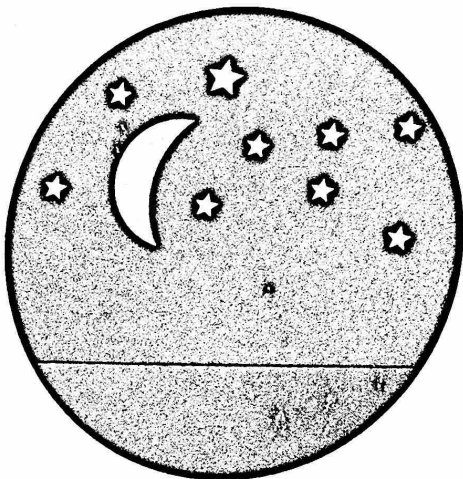
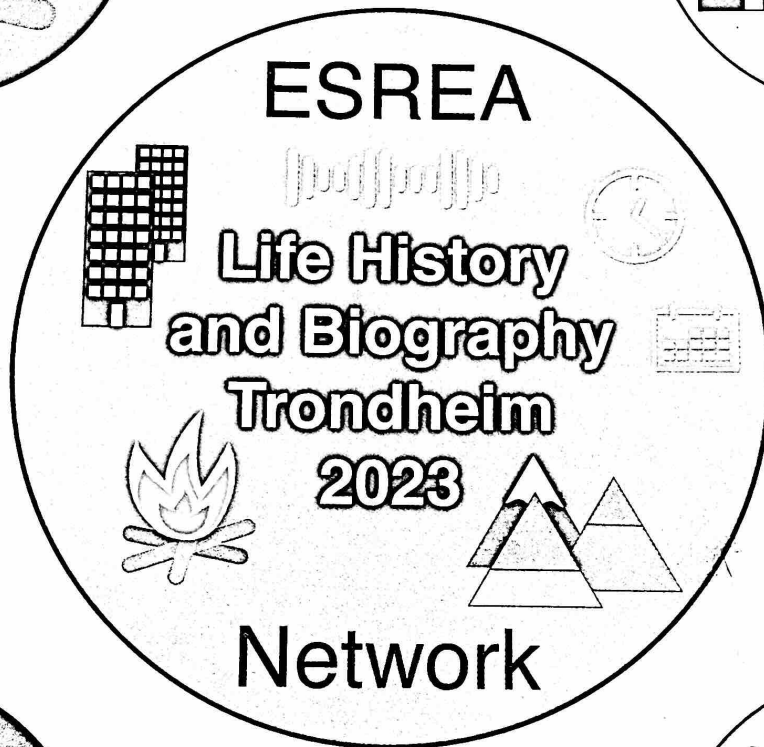
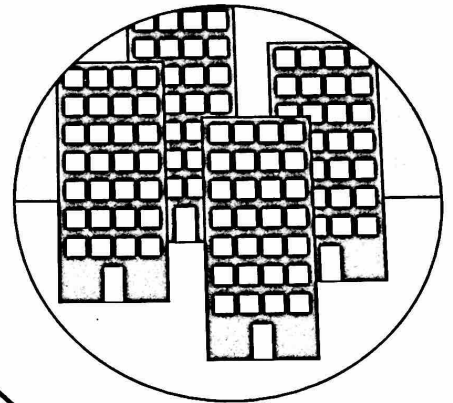
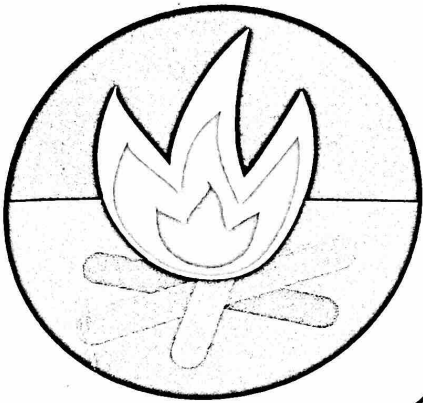


Exploring belonging and meaning

Lifescapes - Landscapes - Timescapes

Edited by Patric Wallin

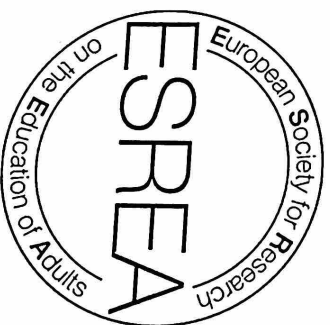


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*Edited by Patric Wallin
Trondheim, Norway, 2023*



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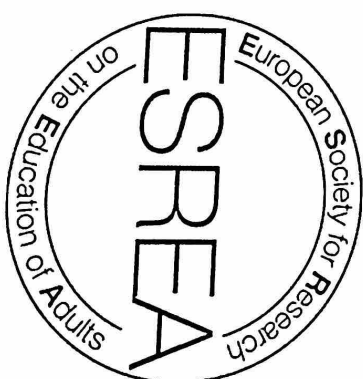


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Guidance beyond work: accepting retirement as a new phase of life

Chiara Biasin and Vanessa Bettin

Age is a social construct that takes on different meanings depending on the society of origin and the era lived in: life time, historical time, social time. The course of life is determined by the intertwining and influence of experiences that characterise the biography of each individual. The apparent fragility of a season of life can be the cause of stereotypes that lead to the isolation of those who enter this phase of life (Ladogana, 2016; Loiodice, 2019). While on the one hand, living conditions have allowed for an increase in longevity, on the other hand, the social system rests on utilitarian elements that legitimise old age as the age of intellectual and productive decline, lacking recognition of the generative value of this phase of life. This cognitive dissonance increases the spread of negative thoughts that affect the well-being of older people's lives, fueling bewilderment and loneliness, with negative consequences in adapting to old age and the retirement period (Loiodice, 2019; Muscato, 2022).

In opposition to old age as a progressive reduction of individual and interpersonal functions and leading to disengagement, loss of interest and motivation towards life (Cunningg, Henry, 1961; Wang & Shi, 2014) it has been pointed out, through the activity theory, that the longer an older person is able to engage in different activities, the higher his or her level of psycho-physical and social well-being (Teles, Riberto, 2019). From this idea, the World Health Organization (2002) stipulated guidelines for the promotion of active ageing policies that represent opportunities for health, participation and security, in order to improve the quality of life of those who age, enabling people to fulfil themselves in the various spheres of existence throughout the life course.

The epistemology underpinning the WHO's choices are linked to the idea of lifelong improvement that involves everyone, regardless of age, recognising its permanence throughout life and varying according to the biography of individuals (Luppi, 2019; Junninen et al, 2019). Outlining the difficulties in accepting old age and considering the role of work in shaping individual identity, withdrawal from the professional world and entering the retirement period can be a complex transition with strong involuntional risks: The complexity of this transition is linked to the difficulties that some dimensions, characterising the existence of the individual, encounter in finding cohesion with respect to the previous personal history, to the expectations regarding the exit from the professional world, to the psycho-social roles required of the retiree, to the new opportunities offered by the context of belonging and to the redefinition of individual and family life planning. Ambivalent and conflicting emotions coexist in this moment of life, influenced to the type of profession carried out, the gender and the socio-cultural and economic level in which the future pensioner is placed (Chiesa, 2009; Tamma, 2017).

Given these premises, the contribution aims to present the first results of an exploratory research carried out in the Italian context and subsequent developments. The question that drove the exploration was to understand whether the guidance to beyond work can be useful to facilitate the acceptance of the retirement period by future pensioners. Thus, the aim was to investigate whether it might be appropriate to discuss beyond-work guidance and to understand how accompaniment along this

path, combined with gradual forms of exit from work, might help future pensioners to achieve personal and social well-being, resulting in the acceptance of the retirement period and a successful transition. Nine operators of retirement and welfare assistance services located in the Veneto Region (Padua, Venice, Rovigo) were involved, who in their work come into contact with elderly young people who are in the work retirement transition phase or who are already retired. Through the semi-structured interview, an instrument which allows us to gather a lot of information than a structured contact with the interviewee, it was possible to explore this issue (Zammuner, 1998).

The content analysis carried out on the corpus of interviews generated a multiplicity of themes, considering positive aspects (active participation through volunteering support for the family, transmission of work knowledge for the company and young workers) and difficulties (lack of support in the work-life transition, change in the labour market, lack of recognition of the value of the elderly person at a social level, inadequate preparation of operators), recognising in the guidance beyond work an appropriate tool to accompany them on the path to retirement. If on the one hand there are those who accept positively and with great expectation the transition to retirement, on the other hand there are those who experience the transition in an anxious manner, worried about not knowing how to re-invest their time and to two of the interviewees. Considering the guidance to beyond work as a facilitating element and a useful accompaniment in the re-designing of personal and social life, the survey will be carried out by administering narrative interviews with the narrative biographical approach (Atkinson, 2002), aimed at those who, despite having entered the phase of retirement from work, continue to exercise their profession, in order to reconstruct the period characterising the years of transition to retirement and to bring out the salient elements that led to re-insertion as a solution to the temporary identity crisis.

The aim of this second investigation will be to understand the emotional character that the work-retirement transition takes on, gathering evidence on what may be the main causes that generate major impediments in the process of professional detachment. In this way, the categories on which the beyond-work guidance can intervene to accompany the pensioner in the acceptance of this phase of life may become more evident. Pedagogical knowledge is entrusted with the task of rethinking old age as a new adulthood, in which the person re-discovers himself and where the time of life is transformed into the age of the future, open to new opportunities for growth and personal fulfilment (Froidévauz et al., 2018; Ladogana, 2017).

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