

Coming Together Under Senex: A Reflexive Field for Aging Studies

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During the past five years 167 articles related to aging in Turkey have been published. When adding other scientific works such as research projects, dissertations and books, the number of publications rises to 246. Two general dispositions are observed when assessing these aging related publications. Firstly, within these publications older adults are the focus and not aging life course. Secondly, studies on aging are solely focused on addressing problems. However, aging studies are not simply to be focused on chronological aging alone. Aging studies should not be directed simply on people above the age of 60 or 65. It is as if researchers infer that problems identified in a given instance are isolated to that particular age alone. It is as if researchers are insinuating that these problems suddenly appear out of nowhere. So, for example, in considering studies on women above the age of 65, researcher find that 1 out of 3 older women are illiterate; such findings implicitly infer that illiteracy appears suddenly without any apparent connection to the life course. However this does not mean that such a study

can be considered an aging study. So aging studies focused on disadvantaged groups should be carried out from a life course perspective. In fact researchers recognize that inequalities in earlier life are magnified throughout the life course. Just as all older adults are not members of homogeneous social groups, all older adults do not lose their capabilities as a result of crossing the magical 65-year threshold. However, many studies implicitly or openly suggest or assume that all older adults are homogeneous, that their life situations have the same common interests. This perspective is a magnificent sociological delusion! Just as old age does not begin at 60 or 65, older adults are not a socially homogeneous group. In this light, when considering aging related works in Turkey over the past 5 years, it is recognized that aging is only a word!

Senex: Journal of Aging Studies, in line with this framework, aims to position itself free of a muddled and non-oriented trajectory. Senex constitutes a free academic platform in which aging and old age are not analysed from a problem-centered orientation, but seeks to promote discussions that bring together original research from an interdisciplinary perspective; disseminating scientific knowledge free from any kind of power relations via an open access policy. Senex is an orchestra drawing from a variety of disciplines!

At the beginning of 2017, I shared our need for a platform for aging studies with my colleague Dr. Jason Holdsworth. Jason is an exceptional social scientist, having completed his PhD on care issues relating to caregivers and care recipients perspectives from a relational viewpoint. At the same time he was one of the first colleagues to offer unconditional support in introducing Senex. Subsequently, Dr. Türkan Yılmaz, with 40+ years of practical experience in aging studies, also came on board.

When I presented my thoughts about Senex in a tidy fashion overseas, I received hearty support from scientists who make a valuable contribution to the field. I was an invited participant of the 43rd annual conference of the Association for Gerontology in Higher Education (AGHE), the first and largest association of its kind. At this meeting, I was asked to give a lecture as the recipient of the Rising Star Award. In this lecture, after evaluating the trajectory of aging studies, I presented the need for a free and independent academic platform. Following the lecture, we met with Prof. Dr. Edward Ansello and requested that he join the Senex advisory board. Ed, turning to his wife Paulette with a grin exclaimed "Can you believe this Paulette, what an honor!" For us this was an incredible and wonderful moment. During the next few days, Jason and I, met to discuss our ideas with four other colleagues. From the first we extended an invitation to Prof.

Dr. Bei Wu to join the editorial board of Senex, she immediately responded, "I'm prepared to join with you in any type of scientific work". We had a delightful talk with Prof. Dr. JoAnn Damron-Rodriguez following her award ceremony and speech. JoAnn, in character, listened intently to our invitation, and the first words from her mouth were, "Yes, of course!". During the same day, we met with Prof. Dr. Jan Jukema. Jan met our invitation with an enthusiastic bear hug! After that we spoke with Prof. Dr. Feng-Hwa Lu. Feng-Hwa responded with a big smile, to convey he was on board. Upon returning to Turkey, I communicated with Prof. Dr. Ayşe Gündüz Hoşgör, my mentor from METU, about starting Senex. She accepted our invitation wholeheartedly. Next, I sent an e-mail to Prof. Dr. James Nazroo explaining developments regarding Senex. James gave an encouraging response, accepting our invitation. We also wrote to Prof. Dr. Oscar Riberio and Prof. Dr. Harald Künemund. Both Oscar and Harald shared our excitement and joined the board. What a wonderful start! Years of fruitful collaboration in the field had given birth to enthusiastic scientists meeting with open heartedness under Senex. Each of the colleagues with whom we met supported our idea. Thus, the idea of establishing Senex no longer belonged to one. It belonged to all of us.

Today, with shared excitement, we present to you the first 7 articles corporately undertaken in Senex. In the very first issue of Senex, scientists and researchers from different disciplines make a contribution. Esteemed colleagues offered invaluable reviews. By offering value-giving suggestions within a two-week review period, they strengthened the contributions of the articles. The adventure has begun with the first issue of Senex: Journal of Aging Studies, our joint achievement, in 2017. Our desire is that,

Senex serves as a platform that: founded on ethically sound research and free from every form of discrimination, brings together scientists,

researchers and users of research findings who produce knowledge from a participatory perspective. In this exploratory adventure, may our scientific exploits be unfettered, independent, reflexive and dynamic.