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Case for Teaching

Dilemmas about Aging and Retirement in the Film 'Going in Style'



Dilemas sobre o Envelhecimento e Aposentadoria no Filme "Despedida em Grande Estilo"

Discipline: Human Resources Management, People Management
Subject: Preparation for Withdrawal
Industry: Private Sector and Public Sector
Geography: Brazil

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INTRODUCTION

Directed by Zach Braff, the movie *Going in Style* premiered in Brazil in 2017 and tells the story of three elderly friends and former employees of the American company Wechsler, which, upon closing its operations in the country, stops paying pensions to former employees. Not developing activities in the country, the company is not required to pay for old tax responsibilities. Thus, fearing they would not be able to meet their needs and honor their financial commitments without the monthly pension, and aiming for better conditions at that stage of life, the main characters, who worked at Wechsler, devise a risky plan to rob the bank where Joe is a customer.

The idea to rob a bank is Joe's, as, without receiving the pension from Wechsler, he fears losing the house where he lives with his daughter and granddaughter, due to debts related to bank loans. When Joe goes to the bank where he is a customer and checks his financial condition, he finds out that his balance is negative and that Wechsler has not deposited his pension for months. The character then asks the manager why he has received a foreclosure notice and, upon being informed of his default, questions the sudden and exorbitant increase in the amount of the installments. The manager tells him that the teaser rate promotion expired in the previous months and, for this reason, the installment amount has increased.

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Amid this situation, Joe is angered by the change in the mortgage during the effective period of the agreement without the relevant clarification by the bank at the time they executed the agreement. The manager alerts him to the fact that he has previously explained the conditions of the refinancing and the potential hike in the installment amounts. Joe, however, concerned about the risk of losing his house and faced with his responsibilities to his family, refutes this argument, saying that his granddaughter Brooklyn and his daughter, who is a nurse's aide, live with him and that his pension and, above all, his house represent important livelihoods for the family.

At the moment the manager was finishing Joe's service, the bank is robbed by three armed men with masked faces. It is important to note that this robbery is not the object of this case, given that it only served as an inspiration for the robbery in which the main characters would later participate. The instruction is that all customers and employees, except the cashiers, should lie on their back on the floor and keep their legs up; however, Joe complains of cramps and one of the robbers allows him to remain seated, at which point the elderly sees a tattoo on the neck of one of the robbers who, during the robbery, hands him his foreclosure notice. At this moment, the robber regrets that Joe is another victim of the banks and says that: "it is a culture's duty to take care of its elderly."

The criminals finish the robbery and leave the place before the police arrive. As a witness, Joe provides testimonies to the police, describing the tattoo that he saw and is dismissed. Next, on their way home, he informs his daughter and granddaughter of the serious situation, even though in a relaxed tone. When Joe meets Willie and Albert, friends who have also retired after years of work at Wechsler, he realizes that they have also received a notice identical to his from the company's pension fund. So, the three of them, after getting no information from anyone from the factory, decide to go there to see what is happening.

Here emerge the dilemmas experienced by the elderly (and the three main characters Willie, Joe, and Albert) during the retirement period. Such dilemmas involve the social representation and the construction of stereotypes of the elderly individual, the lack of preparation for the transition to retirement, and the retirement process itself.

Wechsler and the pension fund

Wechsler is a traditional US company in the civil construction industry whose operations made it possible to employ the characters of the movie for decades. As for the organizational culture, it is possible to note that the

workers join the company when they were still young and remain there their entire labor life, leaving only when they retired. The relationship lasts so much that it mirrors the relationship between the workers themselves, like the protagonists, who, besides being co-workers, are friends for over 30 years. However, despite such a long relationship, the communication proves not to be effective, as the workers are taken completely by surprise by the bankruptcy and confiscation of the company's pension funds.

Arriving at the old company, Joe, Willie, and Albert find other workers, some retired like them, others still discharging their duties. A company representative informs everyone that Wechsler will be phasing out its operations in the United States in 30 days, as, with the demand for specialty parts way down, and the cost of operations rising steadily, the factory will be moved to Vietnam.

The situation causes uproar between the workers. Joe asks him about their pensions and is informed that they were frozen during the company's transitional period. With no activities in the United States, the new company no longer honors Wechsler's old responsibilities, which results in the pension plan being dissolved. Joe turns to the company's representative and says:

— *With all due respect, Donald, thirty years of hard work means shit to you people!*

Surprised by the event, the three friends go to Nat's cafeteria for coffee and pie, as they usually do. Willie realizes that without the pension money, he cannot even pay his rent that month. So Joe proposes they get a lawyer and sue the company. In an ironic tone, Willie replies that they will be dead by the time the settlement comes in, indirectly referring to their age and the length of legal proceedings. When the cafeteria waitress offers them a piece of pie, Willie refuses it saying that they are watching their waistlines, and Albert reveals that they are broke.

About the movie characters

The movie reveals Joe's concern about the struggles to make his refinancing payments due to the loss of the pension previously paid by Wechsler.

In his turn, Willie hides from his friends and family that he has kidney problems and needs a transplant as soon as possible. When he receives a video call from his granddaughter, he appears uncomfortable being away from his family:



Figure 1. Meeting with the employees to inform that Wechsler's stateside operations will be phased out.

Source: A scene from the 2017 feature film *Going in Style*, directed by Zach Braff and distributed by Warner Bros.

- *You're getting real big, K* [Willie].
- *Grew an inch in a month*, replied the granddaughter.
- *Hey, you tell your mom that her career isn't as important as seeing her family* [Willie].
- *I will* [The granddaughter].
- *Promise?* [Willie].
- *I promise* [The granddaughter].
- *Good girl!* [Willie].

Albert also retired after working for years at Wechsler. However, even retired, the character is forced to do informal work to supplement his income — among them, teaching the saxophone. It is a complicated task since Albert's student's lack of skill with the instrument irritates him:

- *Ezra, I can't listen anymore!* [Albert].
- *I've been practicing* [Ezra].
- *It doesn't matter. You get worse every week. You don't like it. You wanna end up like me, working in a factory, and every two months you're getting a 'gig' for 40 bucks at some dive? You don't want that!* [Albert].

In the conversation, Ezra reveals to Albert that he, in fact, does not like the instrument:

- *I don't even like this thing* [Ezra].
- *No! And it doesn't like you, either. Trust me, I'm doing you a favor, you'll thank me for this* [Albert].
- *Thank you, sir* [Ezra].

- *You're very welcome. I'll go find your grandma. She's still got to pay me for the session* [Albert].

When talking to the boy's grandmother, she thanks Albert for his sincerity given the boy's lack of skill for music. The grandmother agrees and, as they say goodbye, they agree to meet at the market where she works.

Later, the three friends meet in the modest apartment Willie and Albert share to celebrate Willie's birthday and give him a watch with a picture of his granddaughter.

- *Happy birthday, young man!* [Albert].
- *Didn't expect you 'broke' bastards to get me anything!* [Willie].
- *Temper your enthusiasm, it's not much* [Joe].

It is in this context that Joe comments his idea with his friends:

- *I think I may rob a bank!* [Joe].

Disbelieving, Albert and Willie take their friend's comment in jest.

- *They're taking my house, I've got 30 days* [Joe].
- *Who's taking your house?* [Willie].
- *The bank* [Joe].
- *They're taking your house and you didn't tell us?* [Albert].
- *What are you gonna do? Lend me money? We're all broke. These banks practically destroyed this country. They crushed a lot of people's dreams, and nothing ever*

happened to them. We're three old guys, we hit a bank, we get away with it, we retire with dignity. Worst comes to the worst, we get caught, we get a bed, three meals a day, and better healthcare than we get now [Joe].

— *You... You're talking about us?* [Willie].

— *Yeah. If a gang of thugs can do it, it can't be that hard* [Joe].

— *Yeah. If a gang of thugs can do it, it can't be that hard* [Willie].

— *You're out of your frigging mind* [Albert].

— *You have spent 20 years waiting to die, Al. With no life and no purpose* [Joe].

— *And robbing a bank is going to give me a purpose?* [Albert].

— *It will give us money. Willie would be able to get on a plane and go and see his granddaughter* [Joe].

— *It's a little hard to catch a plane out of prison, Joe* [Willie].

— *Yeah, but we won't get caught. They didn't get caught* [Joe].

Willie then retorts to his friend:

— *Well, they were young. They were fast* [Willie].

— *We got skills, experience, smarts* [Joe].

— *Arthritis, gout, shingles* [Willie].

At this moment, they are interrupted by other elderly that form part of a group they are participating in. Together they celebrate Willie's birthday and go home. The bank robbery proposal intrigues Willie, who calls Joe to inform him that he is in:

— *I want to live better than I am. I want to see my family more than once a year, and from here on in, I want to have a piece of pie whenever the hell I want a piece of pie* [Willie].

Even though he accepts to go ahead with the idea, Willie has reservations about the attitude they are about to take:

— *I'm not a thief, Joe* [Willie].

— *Neither am I* [Joe].

— *We take exactly what's owed on the pension, right* [Willie].

— *That's all I want* [Joe].

— *Not a penny more* [Willie].

— *My word! Wake Al up...* [Joe].

Albert and Willie live in the same house, so he asks his friend to answer the phone. Albert refuses to answer, so Joe calls directly to the line in his room and asks what he wants: to die slowly, or in style?



Figure 2. Joe, Willie, and Albert talk about the idea of the robbery.

Source: A scene from the 2017 feature film *Going in Style*, directed by Zach Braff and distributed by Warner Bros.

Albert says that he does not have a problem with dying, he just doesn't want to do it in prison. Joe tells him that Willie is in and that Albert should sleep on it:

— *I don't need to sleep on anything. I'm not a bank robber and neither are you. Or you, Willie* [Joe].

After thinking about it, on the next day the friends go to the supermarket and try to steal some items; however, they are caught by the place's monitoring system and run away, and after being chased down the street, they are caught by the place's security guards. Because of their age, the security guard in charge advises them not to do that anymore and releases them.

The planning and execution

Joe and Willie seek help to carry out the bank robbery. Meanwhile, Albert goes to the supermarket where Annie works and arranges a meeting at her house. Later, the three meet in Nat's cafeteria to align actions regarding the robbery:

— *Didn't think you'd be joining us today* [Willie].

— *I'm too old for grudges*, Albert answers.

— *Here. It's in print. Wechsler's pensioner's fund and assets to be distributed to current debtors* [Willie].

— *They're using our retirement money to pay utility bills* [Joe].

— *And that isn't all, check this. Williamsburg Savings Bank will manage the liquidation of the fund and the restructuring of Wechsler's corporate debt* [Willie].

— *That's my bank* [Joe].

— *They're stealing our goddamn pension!* [Albert].

— *That's what it says* [Willie].

— *Forty years I worked for that goddamn company and now they're stealing our pension. Get it out of here. I'm not hungry* [Albert].

— *You want to take it home?* [The waitress].

— *No, leave it here. Nobody's taking anything from me anymore* [Albert].

The news upsets Albert, who speaks openly with his companions:

— *I'm in. I want to rob that bank!* [Albert].

The three look for a man who deals in illegal activities to help with the robbery. The man warns them about the risks and, in a tone of irony, mentions that the robbery is not sitting on a park bench playing bingo. Joe replies:

— *Listen, fella. I don't have to take shit from you. I get enough of this crap out there. In 20 days, I will not have a roof over my head. My social security check is a 'joke' and my pension is tits up. We are going to go through with it. If you want to make 25% helping us, that's fine. But if you don't, keep the bullshit to yourself!* [Joe].

The man agrees to help.

Later, the three friends meet again and start talking about each other's life expectancy:

— *How much time do you think you've got, Willie?* [Joe].

— *I don't know. Two, three years* [Willie].

— *That's it? You look great!* [Joe].

— *Just a feeling. You asked. What about you?* [Willie].

— *Oh, I'd guess, uh, seven years. What about you, Al?* [Joe].

— *I have bad luck. I'll probably live to be 100* [Albert].

— *Then you can do both eulogies* [Willie].

— *Got it* [Albert].

Joe then does a sum of life expectancy to calculate the amount of pension they would receive:

— *So that's 27 years total. Our pensions average USD 45,000 a year. USD 1,215,000 is what we withdraw from the bank* [Joe].

— *What if we get more?* [Willie].

— *We give it to charity* [Joe].

— *Yeah, but what if we get less? I'm not going to go through this twice* [Albert].

After this moment, the three will plan the details of the robbery so that the amount will correspond to what they estimate and so that no unforeseen events occur. They check the position of the cameras, the number of entrances and exits, the number of security guards, and come up with an alibi that they can use, like raising funds for the city's elderly lodge.

They act as planned and take part in the event to raise funds for the lodge. While the event is happening, they slip away and go to the bank. Arriving there, they announce the robbery. In the escape, Willie feels sick and, as he falls to the ground, a child sees the picture of his granddaughter on the watch he was wearing. Restored, Willie, Joe, and Albert flee without being located by the police. They return to the event without anyone noticing their absences and, after the fundraising, go to their homes with the proceeds from the robbery.

To celebrate the success, they go to a restaurant and eat to their heart's content, unlike the deprivation they were

going through because of the lack of money. Willie feels sick again and is taken to the hospital. Only then his friends get to know that he has kidney problems and needs a transplant. In the meantime, the police analyze the images of the robbery and start questioning the three as suspects, but the alibi works pretty well. All the testimonies are corroborated by other people who participated in the fundraising. So the police round up the suspects for witness recognition, but this does not happen even though the child sees, again, and recognizes Willie's watch.

After some time, Joe meets with the man who helped them plan the bank robbery:

- *I thought you might not be coming* [Joe].
- *Well, here I am! So, what's good here, Joey* [Man].
- *Nothing, really* [Albert].
- *Why do you come?* [Man].
- *I like bad coffee* [Joe].
- *Yes, this I understand* [Man].
- *You take your cut?* [Joe].
- *No. Not from you. It is a culture's duty to take care of its elderly* [Man].

They laugh and Joe realizes that the man who helped him is the same who robbed the bank where he is a customer the day he went to complain about his mortgage refinance rates.

Part of the stolen money is left as a gift for the elderly lodge they used to go to. Albert donates a kidney to Willie (his housemate for 25 years), a procedure that works well and they soon recover. Sometime later, Albert marries Annie. During the wedding party, they chat:

- *I'm gonna revise my estimate, Joey* [Willie].
- *How's that?* [Joe].
- *I may be around another 20 years* [Willie].
- *Not with Al's kidney. That's 10 years, tops* [Joe].
- *Close enough, I'll take it* [Willie].

Albert joins them and they all celebrate.

Based on the stories of Willie, Joe, and Albert, the movie deals with the aging process and the dilemmas experienced by the elderly in the retirement period. Such dilemmas involve: (a) the social representation and the construction of stereotypes of the elderly individual — which oscillate between the negative view on old age (associated with limitations) and the positive one, linked to what is called the third age (associated with consumption), (b) the lack of preparation for the transition to retirement — as retirement is treated as an individual decision and not as a multidimensional process, (c) and the retirement process itself — which is surrounded by the individual, family, organizational, and social dimensions.

Teaching Notes

■ ABSTRACT

This teaching case portrays the routine of Willie, Joe, and Albert, three retired elderly people who lose their pension acquired after many years of work at the Wechsler factory. The company is ending its activities in the United States and the bank of which Joe is a client will be managing its liabilities. Living a modest life, the characters will face problems arising from the new context of the post-retirement period. To solve their problems, they decide to rob a bank. The objective of the case is to discuss the aging process and the dilemmas involving the elderly in the retirement period. As far as the data source is concerned, the case is fictitious, built from the movie *Going in style*, directed by Zach Braff and starring Morgan Freeman (Willie), Michael Caine (Joe), and Alan Arkin (Albert). The case uses as a didactic resource the description of scenes and subsequent preparation of teaching notes, which allows teachers and undergraduate and graduate students (both *lato* and *stricto sensu*) to analyze and critically discuss the dilemmas faced by elderly people in the retirement period. The case can be applied in disciplines such as People Management, Human Resource Management, Work and Society, Diversity in Organizations, and Labor Relations.

Keywords: elderly; aging; retirement.

■ RESUMO

Este caso para ensino retrata a rotina de Willie, Joe e Albert, três idosos aposentados que perdem a pensão adquirida depois de muitos anos de trabalho na fábrica da Wechsler. A empresa está encerrando suas atividades nos Estados Unidos e o banco de que Joe é cliente ficará administrando seus passivos. Vivendo uma vida modesta, os personagens começam a lidar com problemas financeiros decorrentes do novo contexto do período pós-aposentadoria. Para solucionar seus problemas, decidem assaltar um banco. O objetivo do caso é discutir o processo de envelhecimento e os dilemas envolvendo idosos no período de aposentadoria. No que se refere à fonte de dados, o caso é fictício, construído a partir do filme *Despedida em grande estilo*, dirigido por Zach Braff e protagonizado por Morgan Freeman (Willie), Michael Caine (Joe) e Alan Arkin (Albert). O caso utiliza como recurso didático a descrição de cenas e posterior elaboração de notas de ensino, o que permite a professores e estudantes de graduação e de pós-graduação *lato sensu* a análise e discussão crítica dos dilemas enfrentados por idosos no período de aposentadoria. O caso pode ser aplicado em disciplinas como Gestão de Pessoas, Gestão de Recursos Humanos, Trabalho e Sociedade, Diversidade nas Organizações e Relações de Trabalho.

Palavras-chave: idosos; envelhecimento; aposentadoria.

Information

The case brings to light the social problem of old age and the not always easy and comfortable reality of elderly people in the period after retirement. Issues such as social representation and the construction of stereotypes about the elderly are presented, as well as the role of companies in preparing workers to leave the labor market for retirement. Other topics include the identification of similarities and differences between the US and Brazilian retirement models, and how financial problems during the retirement period may cause the elderly to begin informal and/or precarious work.

The construction of this teaching case is made from information collected through the movie *Going in Style*, directed by Zach Braff and starring Morgan Freeman (Willie), Michael Caine (Joe), and Alan Arkin (Albert). Although it is a fictional case, some of the scenes and problems raised reflect the social drama of old age and everyday situations experienced by many elderly. The idea is that the dialogues and situations lived by the characters will allow the students to remember some of the plot developments and reflect on them, based on questions that will be proposed to them.

Objectives of the case

The main teaching objectives of the proposal are: (a) to discuss the aging process and the drama of old age in contemporary society and its effects on the labor market, given the social representations, stereotypes, and heterogeneity among the elderly; (b) to enable students to reflect, critically, on some dilemmas related to financial problems involving the elderly in the period after retirement; and (c) to raise the debate about the role of organizations in the transition of the worker from activity to retirement.

Regarding its application, it is possible to use this case in activities with undergraduate and graduate students, as long as the objective of the classes revolves around the discussion about aging, the dilemmas faced by the elderly, and the role of the government and managers in preparing soon to become retirees to leave the labor market. These are subjects covered in disciplines such as People Management, Human Resource Management, Diversity in Organizations, Work and Society, and Employment Relationships.

Questions for debate

- In the movie, Willie, Joe, and Albert socialize with other elderly who, in a group, develop recreational activities. In this context, how do the social representation and the construction of stereotypes of the elderly occur? Is it possible to see the elderly as a homogeneous group? To answer this question, take into account the biopsychosocial aspects of aging.
- Wechsler is the company responsible for paying the pensions of its former employees, but when it winds down its operations in the United States, it fails to honor its financial commitments to the workers. To which extent retirement preparation programs can contribute to the transition of elderly workers to retirement?
- In the movie, the reality addressed is that of the US social security system. What are the similarities and differences between the retirement process in the US and the Brazilian context? And what are the implications for the elderly in both countries?
- How could the government act to avoid situations similar to the one in the movie, both as to the organization and the individuals involved?
- The bank robbery ends up being a 'desperate' way to solve the financial problems that emerged in the period after the characters leave the labor market; however, it is known that, in the daily routine, these problems end up leading the elderly to often work in precarious and/or informal jobs. How do these situations occur in practice, in the Brazilian context? How do workers — young and elderly, active and retired — and organizations have been dealing with them?

Discussion guide

The movie deals with the aging process and the dilemmas experienced by the elderly in the retirement period. Such dilemmas involve the social representation and the construction of stereotypes of the elderly individual, the lack of preparation for the transition to retirement, and the retirement process itself, which will be addressed based on the contextual dimension of aging (Silva, 2008) and the procedural and multidimensional approach to retirement (Helal, Nóbrega, & Lima, 2021). Silva (2008) understands aging, from the perspective of social gerontology, as a social construct, while Helal, Nóbrega and Lima (2021) defend that retirement is not an isolated decision, but a process influenced by individual, family, organizational, and social issues.

We suggest playing the full movie in class, in a session before the proposed activity, thus enabling the discussion of the scenes based on the proposed theme. The professor may propose reading, analyzing the questions, and drafting the answers in small groups, ending the class after a plenary discussion of the most relevant points of the movie that support the debate.

On the other hand, the professor can make the changes he/she believes are relevant to his/her classroom reality, asking the students to watch the movie before the class, at a time and place of their convenience, instead of playing the movie in class. The group work may be preceded by an individual reflection and writing of each question, facilitating the exposure of points of view and collaborating to the deepening of the activity developed collectively.

Table 1, presented below, illustrates the suggested time for each activity.

Table 1. Suggested time for each activity.

Estimated time*	Activities
15 min	Introduction of the case and proposal of the questions to be discussed by the students.
30 min	Organization of the class into small groups. This step aims at allowing students to share their impressions and opinions.
45 min	Sharing and discussing the groups' answers with the whole class.
10 min	Closure of the case and final considerations by the professor.

Note. * The suggestion is based on courses with classes of 100 minutes/day (two periods of 50 min). For courses of 200 minutes/day (four periods of 50 min), we recommend increasing the time for discussion.

Theoretical annotations

The world is going through a demographic transition process with the increase of the older and elderly population

in several countries. About to become one of the most significant social changes of the 21st century, the aging of the population represents a global phenomenon, with distinct implications for several domains of the society, including

the labor and financial markets, the demand for goods and services, as well as family structures and intergenerational ties. The demographics evidence that Brazil is one of the countries where this process is occurring most rapidly (Castro, Costa, Cesar, Neves, & Sampaio, 2019; Organização das Nações Unidas [ONU], 2020).

In this context, studying the phenomenon of aging, which brings distinct implications for several domains of the society, is even more compelling, as conceptions on the subject are (re)elaborated in contemporary Western societies, based on the identification of the challenges and implications of population aging for the workforce structure in organizations, for the work and the worker (Programa das Nações Unidas para o Desenvolvimento [Pnud], 2019; Ziger, Filippim, & Beltrame, 2017).

So for **question 1**, it is worth noting that, for a long time, the aging process was related to concepts of rest, quietness, and inactivity of the elderly person. These concepts are being deconstructed over time (but not eliminated), while issues such as learning, flexibility, and personal satisfaction are also being associated with this process.

It is important to remember that chronological age is a basic mechanism for assigning status, defining occupational roles (entry into the job market), and making social demands (Fortes, 1984) and that age identity is constructed through common sense — for example, elderly portrayed as people sitting on rocking chairs, weak, fragile, hearing impaired, as pointed out by Butler (1980). In addition, identities attributed based on the individual's age may validate or limit people's behavior when we use age as a reference (Silva, 2008).

The elderly are socially represented in different ways: often there is a negative connotation linked to the loss of physical, cognitive, and productive capacity, often using the terms 'old' and 'old age' (Silva, 2008) in a pejorative way for the individual; on the other hand, there is also a claiming discourse, especially beginning with gerontology, which sees old age as a problem and a social construct. Age identity is also understood in association with learning, personal satisfaction (Silva, 2008), experience, and maturity of the individual (Couto, Koller, Novo, & Soares, 2009).

It is possible to establish a relation between the stigmatized representation, fruit of the imaginary (Silva, 2008), and the construction of stereotypes of the elderly individual, which match the social marginalization imposed by reduced productive roles that the elderly can play. Specifically, in the organizational context, Silva and Helal (2019) point out that this stigmatized image attributed to the elderly individual occurs when he is attributed, among several negative characteristics, the 'unproductive' status.

This condition reinforces stereotypes and age discrimination (ageism) in a context in which organizations are provoked to deal with the challenges resulting from this new composition of the workforce and to retain older workers in their staff (Barros, 2011; Tonelli, Pereira, Cepellos, & Lins, 2020; Ziger et al., 2017).

We understand that, although the natural aging process may result, in some cases, in reduced physical and/or cognitive abilities of elderly people (Silva, 2008), it is necessary to consider that this process occurs in a heterogeneous way among individuals, due to their life experiences, trajectories, and realities (Camarano, Kanso, & Mello, 2004). Aging and old age are plural, as they are influenced by social, color/race, gender, location, social origin issues, among others. Such intersections make this process multifaceted and dynamic (Camarano et al., 2004), as observed in the movie, for example, among the elderly who lived in the lodge.

For **question 2**, we understand that starting from the revision of the representations and attempt to overcome the stereotypes of aging, understanding work relationships and conditions and their aspects based on the social interaction among generations, becomes a requirement for understanding the organization itself as a reflection of the society (Werneck, 2011). Organizational initiatives, such as retirement preparation programs, can imply a more positive perception of this process, while the issues deemed negative by workers and organizations can be re-elaborated and even mitigated. This may happen in the pre-retirement stage, through preparation programs for this moment of transition, starting with the contribution so that employees can prepare their financial planning and think about other benefits related to retirement and life project (Helal et al., 2021; Rau & Adams, 2012).

It is possible to note that the financial issue is one of the most important aspects of the retirement period. The financial resources may come from social security programs, employer-provided retirement benefit programs, and personal investments. Benefits provided by the employer may help employees fund their retirement years, and arise from the time worked at the organization and the salary received there (Rau & Adams, 2012).

It is also important that, in addition to financial benefits, organizations promote individual investments (savings), as many soon to become retirees are financially unprepared for the retirement period, whether due to lack of financial education and planning or the conditions imposed for livelihood (Rau & Adams, 2012). Additionally, organizations may provide private retirement plans with voluntary adherence and escalation of the contribution amount over time.

This planning may entail the decision of whether or not to continue working after being vested with the right to retirement (Oliveira, Almeida, & Nunes, 2021). In the movie, for example, even though Joe is retired, he needs to do small jobs to supplement his income. This decision involves individual and professional factors, since income from retirement may be deemed insufficient by many retirees (Helal et al., 2021), especially among women, who are often the family provider even in their old age (Oliveira et al., 2021). These aspects reinforce the need to problematize aging in the organizational environment and the actions of organizations, such as the adoption of retirement preparation programs.

For **question 3**, it is important to note that the movie may be taken as an example to address the differences and similarities between the retirement process in the US and Brazilian contexts. It is possible to analyze the operation of social security programs in each country, the laws and regulations, criteria for granting retirement, and social security benefit programs of companies in both contexts (Rau & Adams, 2012).

Like labor laws and regulations, the retirement system assumes different settings among countries, based on criteria such as minimum age, time of social security contribution, and the percentage of the salary the workers receive when they retire. A focal difference is that, in the United States, the retirement benefits are paid by the public social security system, and part of the retirement benefits are paid by private (and organizational) pension systems, and the smallest part is paid by the government. Here in Brazil, it is the contrary: most retirees' income comes only from the government, through the Brazilian National Social Security Institute — INSS, which is responsible for paying the retirement benefit to Brazilian workers, except for statutory government employees; few companies have private pension funds. In the Brazilian reality, we highlight a few organizations that have funds for the workers, such as Funpres, Petros (Petrobras), and Previ (Banco do Brasil).

Recently, the National Congress enacted Constitutional Amendment number 103 (Brasil, 2019), establishing new retirement rules for the private sector (General Regime) and federal government employees. Among the main changes is the fixation of minimum retirement age; the minimum contribution time; transition rules for the new regime; and the amount deducted from the salary. In general, there are differences in the contribution time between men and women, and different rules for some categories, such as primary and lower secondary education teachers, federal police officers, legislators, and penitentiary and educational agents (Brasil, 2019).

For **question 4**, it is important to consider the possibilities for the government to act on a preventive basis,

which, by itself, already has significant practical implications, even more so in the current national context. In the Brazilian public sector, the vice of legalism express itself in many, if not all, instances of the Brazilian bureaucracy and, especially in the Legislative Branch, is expressed in laws whose bills,

“instead of being based on data and evidence to solve a problem of public interest, are captured by common sense (at best) or interest groups and become patchwork quilts; when this new law is translated into an infinite number of Ordinances and Normative Instructions that try to administratively translate the content of the law; when this non-statutory arsenal, full of contradictions, inconsistencies, gaps, and overlaps, it is all the Brazilian public manager knows as the best of administrative ‘rationality’; and when the Judiciary Branch, government accountability offices, or prosecution services question the result of these administrative decisions, which are incomprehensible from the perspective of the constitutional principles and administrative rationality itself, but end up imposing greater irrationality on public managers. All these manifestations are legal, but irrational chaos continues to reign” (Peci, 2020, online).

Thus, the discontinuance of the organization's activities in the national territory (US) entails the dissolution of the pension plan, leaving the benefited retirees, who counted on it for their personal and family income, helpless. In a country with the legislative and judiciary branches permeated by legalisms and irrationalities, as previously observed by Peci (2020), the construction of laws and programs that can deal with such scenarios becomes essential to assist the general population and especially the elderly, in addition to revisiting social security aspects, as well as public and private retirement plans, which encompass personal and business interests.

In the Brazilian case, even though the Statute of the Elderly and the Brazilian Federal Constitution itself include the government as one of the parties responsible for protecting the elderly, reality indicates that they have been in a helpless situation. As already indicated in the text, the Brazilian social security system is different from the US system, as ours is mostly public, and theirs is private. However, social security reforms have been thought of (and implemented) in the Brazilian territory, leaving the elderly less and less protected.

In addition to rethinking the very scope of social security reforms, whether in Brazil or other countries, one way to strengthen the network of support for the elderly is to re-discuss (and restate) the roles of several social actors regarding this challenge. In addition to the government, the family, organizations, and society itself can play a more active role in caring for the elderly, seeking to prevent

situations such as the one in the movie under discussion here. The government can propose laws and regulations that seek to expand this support network for the elderly, based on actions and responsibilities shared among the abovementioned actors.

For **question 5**, we assume that, while there are narratives that defend retirement as a final flag of professional life, associated with success and freedom, there are also difficult situations that make it impossible for elderly workers to achieve retirement. For people from lower social classes and places with a disadvantaged economic reality, the likelihood of retiring during their life is lower compared to people from more privileged social classes (Smith & Dougherty, 2012). Even among retirees, there is often a need to supplement their income.

Accordingly, work for elderly retirees may represent a source of supplemental income essential to retirement and their dignity as a person (Vanzella, Lima, & Silva, 2010). In the movie, for example, Albert reports that he does some work in a dive to earn about USD 40.00 per day. This indicates the reality of many retired workers, who see informal jobs and/or poor employment bonds as a path to subsistence and improvement of living conditions (Campos & D'Alencar, 2014). Additionally, given the aspects demonstrated and after exposing the existing difficulties in maintaining or obtaining formal employment, the high frequency of self-employment among the elderly in Brazil is justified.

Researches show that the elderly of both genders, compared to younger people, are less likely to find new jobs and, when they do, they are frequently faced with pay cuts, i.e., when they do manage to reenter the job market, they often do not achieve the respective salary recognition (Castro et al., 2019; Ziger et al., 2017). As an example that strengthens the exposed argument, a research carried out by the Superintendent's Office for Economic and Social Studies in Bahia indicates that, in the metropolitan area of Salvador, in the formal job market, the elderly remain present in activities deemed more traditional and precarious (Superintendência de Estudos Econômicos e Sociais da Bahia [SEI], 2018).

In the movie, in addition to the informal supplementation of income, the interruption in the pension payments by Wechsler leads Willie, Joe, and Albert to the extreme attitude of robbing a bank. While the plot seems far from reality, in March 2021 an elderly wheelchair user threatened to blow up an INSS location if he did not receive the delayed installments of his temporary disability benefit (Queiroga, 2021). Such a desperate situation enables the problematization of the theme, as it is known that, in the mentioned context, countries will have to think of alternatives to conciliate the increase in the active elderly population, the restructuring of the workforce, and organizational sustainability.

To close the session, the need to problematize the social issue of old age and the organizations' responsibility regarding the phenomenon is based on the understanding that the elderly generally face a choice between poverty and discrimination in the workplace at all levels — recruitment and selection, training and development, performance management and career advancement opportunities, retention.

Finally, it is important to note that the case, by dealing with dilemmas about aging and the retirement process, presented and discussed possibilities regarding these issues, aiming at demythologizing the search for a 'solution' for retirement. We did not try to present a guide for 'good' retirement, but to treat it as a complex, multidimensional process that demands shared responsibilities in its preparation.

We also believe that organizations have contributed to create obstacles for the insertion and maintenance of older and elderly workers in the formal job market, by valuing and privileging younger workers in their discourse and practices. Therefore, this case can contribute, in our opinion, to the formation of 'new' managers by problematizing the aging phenomenon and the role of organizations (and of the managers themselves) in facing the challenges of this new composition of the workforce and fighting ageism on its several fronts.

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