

Editorial

John Bynner

The publication of the October issue of the journal marks a number of significant events in the journal's life history. The early volumes comprising three issues now give way to our first four-issue volume – Volume 6. The Society for Longitudinal and Life Course Studies conference just held in Dublin was similarly sixth in its series, beginning with the society's foundation in Cambridge in 2010.

Annual conference

Held in the magnificent setting of Dublin Castle, the latest conference had the highest attendance yet with 340 participants from more than 20 countries. There were more papers presented than ever before in the five programme strands, including a 'workshop' strand comprising five symposia devoted to the longitudinal research/policy interface.

Every paper and symposium is a potential publication for the journal, so the symbiosis between journal and society yields dividends all round. The larger the number of participants, the larger the potential number of authors of individual papers and special sections.

Editorial challenges

Yet enthusiasm needs to be tempered with one major concern from the Editorial Committee meeting – the increasing difficulty in persuading subject experts to accept invitations to review papers. With the expansion of journal content, the number of peer reviews conducted continues to increase, rising from 146 in 2013 to 185 in 2015 – an ever pressing demand on an ever-shortening supply.

We brain-stormed in Dublin various ways of heading off refusals, and these will be tested in the coming months, but the need is always for more experts to approach. And that is partly a matter of reputation. We rely on you, the 2000+ writers and readers of the journal, to sing its praises whenever you can.

Current issue

The content of this issue is also breaking new ground in a number of ways. It starts with two papers in the relatively new area for the journal of *life course criminology*. The first focuses on family life courses and child outcomes in high crime risk socioeconomic backgrounds, covering life events recorded from a range of administrative and survey data collected for a Dutch cohort of 522 across the age period 18-50.

The second paper similarly investigates criminal propensity risk. This time attention is focused on the paradox that low risk population populations tend to produce relatively more negative (criminal) outcomes than the expected high risk minority ones, arguing against highly targeted interventions.

Using simulated and large scale birth cohort study data, the third paper moves to optimising bias removing strategy for progressing the results of mixture modelling directed at patterns of change – at different levels of classification quality ('entropy') – to the identification of latent classes.

The paper following is again a first of its kind, profiling the long-standing Zurich longitudinal study spanning a period of 40 years starting with the transition from school to work. The journal welcomes the opportunity, unique to longitudinal research, of such life histories giving unparalleled insights into the ways important research design and operation decisions were taken and their consequences for the later development of the study and its outputs.

Next comes the second of our new LCCS ventures, 'Comment and Debate' on major topical issues in longitudinal and life course research. This issue's debate is about the role of national population sampling in longitudinal research and comprises a discussion paper from Harvey Goldstein challenging the need for such sampling. He argues that scientific advance is best gained from multiple replication in different settings rather than

parameter estimation for a population that, from first contact, is getting progressively out of date. The paper is followed by responses from leading experts in the field to whom he exercises his right of reply.

Finally, we complete the debate which began in the July issue on the socioeconomic gradient in

cognitive development with the response from lead author Leon Feinstein.

Debates in subsequent issues will address 'Allostatic Load' and 'Positive Health'. The whole series may lend itself to reproduction for wider readership in monograph form and will be kept under review.