

ARTICLE

# 'I can still drive a car.' Self-presentation in later life and the symbolic value of driving

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(Accepted 19 April 2023)

## Abstract

This qualitative study draws attention to the symbolic value of driving or having a valid driver's licence among older adults as part of their impression management. While several studies have focused on driving behaviour, safety, risk factors and not least the consequences of driving cessation, the present study from the Faroe Islands contributes to the body of knowledge concerning older adults and driving by bringing an impression management lens to this issue. Social constructionism formed both the theoretical and methodological approach and data came from interviews with three couples and eight individuals in their eighties. All the male participants still had their driver's licence and were active drivers except for one. Among the women, four had driver's licences and three were active drivers. Our findings point to the necessity of understanding the reluctance to give up driving as being not only related to quality of life, mobility and independence, but also being highly related to preserving one's identity as a competent and 'not that old' person. Contrary to common prejudices against older drivers, the findings also showed that these participants reported self-regulation adjustments to continue driving safely. The study indicates a need to support older drivers to continue driving if they wish to do so. It is not only a question of mobility or being independent, but also related to preserving one's social identity in later life.

**Keywords:** ageing; identity; self-esteem; self-presentation; driving; social constructionism

## Introduction

Old age is often associated with negative stereotypical attributes such as frailty, dependence, ill health and loneliness (Cuddy *et al.*, 2005; Rozanova, 2010). Several studies have shown how older people resist being members of the category 'old' (Hurd, 1999; Lund and Engelrud, 2008; Weiss and Lang, 2012; Róin, 2014) by expressing that they feel younger than they look, by distancing themselves from what they consider to be the 'real old', by modelling their physical appearance and, not least, by emphasising their active lifestyle (Katz, 2000; Walker, 2007).

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As Giddens (2005: 142) contends, ‘People are sensitive to how they are seen by others and use many forms of impression management to compel others to react to them in the ways they wish’.

Several researchers have studied the subject of driving in old age from different perspectives (Betz and Lowenstein, 2010; Meng and Siren, 2012; Barrett *et al.*, 2018; Barrett and Gumber, 2019). The predominant focus has been on driving behaviour, safety and risk factors, and, not least, driving cessation (Musselwhite and Shergold, 2013; Siren and Haustein, 2015; Barrett and Gumber, 2019). To our knowledge, talking about driving among older adults as part of managing a positive impression has not been studied previously.

Self-presentation or impression management are aligned concepts that refer to ‘the process of controlling how one is perceived by others’ (Leary *et al.*, 2003: 624). Goffman (1959: 152) has suggested that ‘any social establishment may be studied profitably from the point of view of impression management’. We used active interviewing, as suggested by Holstein and Gubrium (1995); it refers to an establishment or enterprise where people construct the meaning of their daily experiences, including taking up positions in interaction using symbols.

For people in later life, self-presentation often requires increased management effort to ensure that their impression on others matches the way they see themselves. Earlier work by Featherstone and Hepworth (1993) has pointed out that age provokes an inconsistency between what people attribute based on physical appearance and the experience of the self. As Biggs (2005: 121) states, ‘The dilemma that has to be managed is that of a youthful self that finds itself trapped in an aging body’. An important part of impression management among older adults thus relates to presenting oneself in a way that matches how one feels ‘inside’, irrespective of age and physical appearance. From a literature review, Martin *et al.* (2000) found that older people’s concerns about self-presentation seem to centre around three primary themes: physical appearance, competence and self-reliance, and behaviour norms. Regarding competence and self-reliance, continuing to drive might be an effective way of holding off an individual’s perception of growing old, given all the ageist implications regarding competence and behaviour normally related to the category of being ‘old’ (Jetten and Pachana, 2012). Pachana *et al.* (2017: 1598) have argued that ‘one reason that driving cessation is resisted and stressful is because it also implies a change in social identity in terms of “young” to membership in the less desirable “old” group’.

Eisenhandler (1990) explored the concept ‘asphalt identikit’ among older adults in a small community. She found that having a driver’s licence links with an identity as competent and independent in later life. She stresses that the loss of a driver’s licence is a strong symbol of inevitable decline, which is a reason why older people resist giving up driving – to ward off old age as a stigma.

A review of the qualitative literature on driving among older adults showed that a common theme was that driving brought about a sense of subjective freedom and independence, whereas driving cessation represented a state in which one became dependent on others (Gardezi *et al.*, 2006). Other negative outcomes have been linked to driving cessation, including reduced quality of life (Peel *et al.*, 2002; Liddle *et al.*, 2012; Musselwhite and Shergold, 2013) and even depression (Marottoli *et al.*, 1997; Coughlin, 2001; Fonda *et al.*, 2001; Ragland *et al.*, 2005; Chihuri *et al.*, 2016).

Larger population-based studies have compared outcomes in physical and mental health and community participation between drivers and retired drivers. These studies have shown that retired drivers have poorer outcomes in physical and mental health and community participation than those who continue to drive (Marottoli *et al.*, 2000; Ragland *et al.*, 2005; Freeman *et al.*, 2006; O'Connor *et al.*, 2013). Additionally, the findings indicate that driving cessation is predictive of morbidity, admission to residential care and mortality, even when adjusted for age, health and frailty indicators (Freeman *et al.*, 2006).

As driving is the most common means of transport, having a driver's licence becomes indispensable, especially in areas with limited public transport available.

Originally, the aim of this study was to investigate everyday life among home-dwelling men and women in their eighties living in the Faroe Islands. However, driving or having one's driver's licence renewed was a topic that was highlighted by most of the participants, often spontaneously. We thus decided to further examine how the meaning of driving and having a valid driver's licence was constructed and how these constructions became part of the participating men and women's ways of managing impressions during interviews on daily living.

The Faroe Islands are a small-scale society on an archipelago comprising 17 inhabited islands in the North Atlantic Ocean. The infrastructure has developed tremendously in recent decades, with tunnels and bridges connecting the larger islands, but these developments have primarily favoured private motoring, although most cities and villages are served by public transport (Róin, 2015).

Regarding the legal right to drive for senior citizens, the driver's licence policy in the Faroe Islands specifies a mandatory medical examination for everyone at age 75 and again at age 80. After this, the examination must be repeated every other year.

## Data and methods

Our qualitative study draws on social constructionism as both the theoretical and methodological point of departure. This implies that the aim is not to study what people know about a certain topic, but rather to examine how knowledge or meanings are constructed in interactions (Burr, 2003; Gubrium and Holstein, 2008). We used 'active interviewing', a constructionist approach to doing qualitative interview, as proposed by Holstein and Gubrium (1995). The active interview is an open-ended interview that is characterised by flexibility and active listening, recognising that both the interviewer and the interviewee jointly engage in the process of meaning-making for a phenomenon.

## Participants

During the summer of 2019, three couples, four individual men and four women living around the Faroe Islands were interviewed about daily living. They were all part of the Faroese Septuagenarian cohort established by the Department of Occupational Medicine and Public Health in the Faroe Islands (DOMP) in 2008/2009 (Petersen *et al.*, 2019). In 2018/2019, a ten-year follow-up examination was conducted with the survivors of the cohort, who were now in their eighties; 349 participated. Among these participants, 14 men and women were selected. Our aim was to include participants as broadly and inclusively as possible and

provide a balanced sample in terms of gender, age and location. The selected men and women were asked if they would be willing to give an interview about daily living. If they agreed to participate, an arrangement was made on when and where to meet. Three men preferred to meet on the DOMP's premises, while all the others preferred the interview to take place in their homes.

An interview guide was compiled before the first interview. The guide was thematic, encompassing only a few questions that addressed the following: the meaning of ageing, daily living, important conditions for having a good life and prospects or concerns. The first and third authors conducted the interviews, which each lasted from 50 to 85 minutes. The interviews were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim, emphasising what was said by whom.

### **Analysis**

The interview texts were read and reread several times. A coding system was evolved whereby repeated themes were recognised and text sections concerning these themes were compiled in separate documents. One such theme was on how the interviewees talked about driving and having a valid driver's licence, thereby presenting themselves in a positive manner as competent and capable persons. Text sequences dealing with this issue were bracketed and transcribed in detail (for transcription symbols, *see* the Appendix). Analyses were conducted in the original language, Faroese. Translation to English was not performed until a decision was made on what excerpts to include in our presentation of findings.

### **Ethical considerations**

The Septuagenarian follow-up study was approved by the Faroese Ethical Committee and the Faroese Data Protection Board. All the participants provided informed consent. They were informed that they could withdraw at any time for any reason.

### **Findings**

Driving and having your driver's licence renewed was constructed as an important factor in considering how to manage daily living. All the male participants had had their driver's licences renewed, and all except one were active drivers. Among the female participants, three women had never taken driving lessons. Both Maren and Lilian had always relied on their husbands to drive and Kate, a widow living in the capital, had never felt the need to drive herself. She relied on family members to take her when needed, or used public transport which, as she said, could be a problem especially at night and at weekends. For Beth, a widow aged 83 living in a village on a smaller island, having her driver's licence was vital to her after her husband's death. She needed the car to drive to the main village on the island to buy groceries, *etc.* She therefore had her licence renewed and, as she said, she felt comfortable driving on the island, but not in the capital area. She always left her car at the ferry terminal when visiting her children living in the capital.

In interviews with three of the male participants, driving did not come up as a topic at all. It was rather a matter of course that they were still driving. For others, who were able to drive and had their driver's licence renewed, this became an important part of their way of presenting themselves in a positive manner, as

competent and capable persons, and thereby proving wrong the stereotypical negative and ageist images of older people. Apart from signalling competence and capability, talk about driving was also used to assert the image of older drivers as responsible drivers who are conscious of possible limitations and challenges.

We will present our findings by analysing a few rather long excerpts to illustrate how driving was constructed in the interaction during the interviews. Rather than picking short passages to support analytic statements, a constructionist approach requires the very construction of meaning to be accounted for, including the interviewers' participation. From reading and rereading the transcripts, coding for recurring issues of importance regarding daily living and driving, we found that two themes were important to understand how driving was used to manage impressions during the interviews: first, being able to drive and having your driver's licence renewed and, second, being responsible and conscious about one's own limitations. Because both themes often came from within the same extracts, we will present our findings as a connected whole instead of dividing them into themes.

### **Extract 1**

The first extract is from the interview with Linda, aged 84. She lives with her male friend, who suffers from various health problems, in a village north-east of the capital. The talk had been about her garden and balcony, where she enjoys spending her hours in the summer and spring. However, hypersensitive skin has forced her to reduce her hours in the sun and use protective lotions:

L: I must be careful (.) apply lotion with 100? (protective factor) if I stay out in the sun [oh] (.) but never mind, I enjoy it anyhow [yes] just put the chairs outside and (.) if somebody comes by to have a cosy chat, then it's lovely. I can still drive a car [you drive?] yes (.) I had my licence renewed for two years (2) [that means freedom to eh] (.) yes it really does (.) it does for sure.

I: So, you often drive? You often go for a ride?

L: Well (2) not so often now (.) I sometimes drive up north to K (a town about 20 miles away) [oh] I do that, I have two sisters there (she tells shortly about her sisters) I often go there [it's a long way to drive?] yes, it really is (.) but I have to say that my eyes (.) I tell myself, be careful now (.) I never drive after dark (.) I don't do that [no] I will not put myself at risk for anything [no, but you don't have to be 84 to] no, you know, that's for sure (.) and also now that we have gotten these roundabouts here on the island (.) you know what, it is (2) that's what you were told, just drive, go directly [yes, yes] I don't know what to say (.) watch out and [oh yes] you have to practise to be able to drive in a roundabout.

After talking about her sensitive skin and the necessary precautions to take, without being asked, Linda suddenly shifts the subject by saying, 'I can still drive a car'. After talking about a health problem that she relates to her age, she makes a verbal manoeuvre away from presenting herself as an older person affected by an age-related skin condition. Being able to drive signals both physical and mental capability, not only from one's own view, but also as authorised by a physician. She is not just driving; she also has permission to do so for the next two years.

The interviewer then suggests that driving equates to a sense of freedom, which Linda supports by repeating twice that that is what it is, freedom.

When asked about her driving activities, Linda admits that she does not use the car as much as before. Her answer, 'well' and then a pause before continuing, marks a shift in her self-presentation. After talking about driving in a convincing and proud way, in the next passage, Linda makes certain reservations regarding her driving ability. The interviewer considers a 20-mile drive as a long drive for her, to which Linda agrees ('it really is'), although 20 miles for others would mean a short distance. Apart from this, Linda has limited her driving to only in the day-time, as she has problems driving in the dark; she feels that it is an unnecessary risk to take. The interviewer then interrupts her by emphasising that this is not just a phenomenon among 84-year-old people, which we understand as a way to encourage Linda and imply that night blindness among younger drivers is also common. Linda approves, but again there is a shift in her talk about reservations concerning driving when she mentions roundabouts as being challenging, something she needs to practise and get accustomed to. In the last part of the extract, Linda is presenting herself as responsible, knowing her limits and taking the necessary precautions to avoid risks in traffic.

### **Extract 2**

The following extract is from the interview with Edvard, an 83-year-old man living with his wife in a smaller village about 20 miles north of the capital. Edvard has had different health problems, feeling short of breath, and having problems managing tasks that were easy before. We enter the conversation where Edvard talks about his health condition:

E: I don't know. I have had all kinds of medical examinations, and everything is just fine (.) the lungs are good, my heart is good, it is pumping alright, and I don't know why nothing works as I want it to do [no, that is not easy to understand then, no] no and my bowels are ok so.

I: So, are you driving?

E: Yes, but I shouldn't (.) and probably I don't do it when I am not supposed to either (.) it depends on how I feel and when I go to Tórshavn I get hold on my grandson (.) he doesn't do anything anyway [oh], then he takes the wheel and drives [in Tórshavn?] yes, in Tórshavn, yes. (2) I am not sure if I notice all that I should, yes, and if I was to lose my driver's licence well, then I am finished, to stay indoors and just (sighs).

I: So, it is important for you to keep the car?

E: Yes, I have my car, I must have it and my car is in tip-top condition [okay, so you see to that yourself?] No, not anymore, I did that before [you did?] yes, I did when cars were still something you could work on yourself (more about cars nowadays).

I: So, is your wife driving?

E: No, she doesn't drive, she got her licence once, but she blames me for not driving.

I: That's usual, isn't it? (E laughs)

E: That is how it is (laughs more) but maybe I am a little impatient and

I: But it is good to have a car, you get around but (.) how about public transport? Do you have buses?

E: Oh yes, the bus stops just across the street.

I: Okay so you don't have to walk down to the centre?

E: No, no you don't need to walk far at all, I get all the way home (laughs) almost into the kitchen (laughs).

I: That sounds easy, so it is possible to go to Tórshavn without having your own car?

E: Yes, that's possible but then you must keep an eye on the watch all the time and you don't [do you go to Tórshavn often?] yes, yes, but not as much as we used to.

This extract starts with Edvard talking about his health condition. Despite all kinds of medical examinations, he has not received an answer to why he feels so tired out and lacking in strength to do what he wants. The interviewer expresses sympathy by saying that she understands his worries, after which Edvard adds information about his bowel condition. The description of bodily functions is very detailed. Age is never mentioned directly, but during the interview, Edvard uses past tense several times in presenting himself, referring to his earlier activities and achievements.

After the health issue, the interviewer then asks if he drives. The 'so' in the question seems to be a way to deduce a possible consequence of the way he feels. However, Edvard answers that he does drive, even if he should not, but in the next sentence he modifies this with the word 'probably' (as in, he will not do it), saying that it depends on how he feels. He has reservations when going to Tórshavn, the capital. He is not sure if he is able to take notice of all that he should, so he lets his grandson take over because he 'does not do anything anyhow'. His remark about his grandson legitimises him asking for help. If the grandson does not do anything anyhow, Edvard himself is not a burden to anyone, which becomes an important part of his way of managing the impression of being self-reliant. This also becomes visible when he talks about his car and keeping it in tip-top condition. It is not that he is unable to do it himself, but it is because of the way cars are constructed nowadays. However, he is worried and admits that he is afraid of losing his driver's licence: 'Well, then I am finished'. The interviewer agrees that it is good to have a car, but she comes up with the alternative to use a bus when she asks about public transport. There are buses available, and there is no need to walk far to catch a bus, but Edvard refuses; he argues that when you use public transport, you become a slave to the clock. Having his wife drive is not an option either. She once got her licence but has never used it. When the interviewer mentions that this is typical, Edvard laughs and admits that he has been too impatient.

### **Extract 3**

The third extract is from the interview with the couple Sara and Hans, who are both 83 years of age. They live in a small village on an island connected to the main area by a bridge and a tunnel. Hans has been working offshore on different fishing boats. Sara has raised their four children, taking care of the house as well as small-scale animal husbandry. In this part of the conversation, the talk had been about how much the Islands have changed, especially regarding infrastructure and accessibility to shopping centre and services:

S: Now it's all about tunnels (.) everywhere [yes, much has changed] yes, that's for sure

I: Do you drive yourselves? (Both nod) Yes?

H: Yes, or no, but not each our own car (they both laugh) we did for a year or two [you both drive?] (.) well, I have to say that I (.) I don't drive at all (.) I neither bother nor (.) but I have my licence, I have renewed it (.) all the time. My brother comes by sometimes, then I go with him and then I just sit there.

I: Do you use the car for shopping or?

H: It is no good when she comes along [oh?] then I call her Hyacinth [oh] (all laugh) [is she stepping on the brakes? Is she interfering?] well, that happens.

S: If we go somewhere (.) but normally I sit in the back (laughs).

H: But it's better to have Hyacinth in the car than (.) than [she can give good advice] (all laugh) my dear, now you are too far to the left (.) oh so (.) I don't think I was (.) then we drove a little further (.) now you are too far to the right (she laughs) so we swing back and forth.

S: Now you sit there lying about me (all laugh).

This extract is rather short and different, but it shows how humour can be used to manage giving a positive impression of oneself by telling a story about driving. Sara and Hans both have their driver's licence and have had them renewed. Hans says that he does not drive anymore; he does not bother with it and instead lets his brother drive. It is, however, important for him to stress that he still has his licence. The interviewer then asks if they use the car for shopping. Instead of answering, the question provokes a humorous story about their driving. Hans calls his wife Hyacinth, referring to the figure in the television serial *Keeping Up Appearances*. They all laugh; the interviewer goes along with the joke. Sara goes along with it as well, though she claims that she sits in the back of the car. The story goes on with more details. It is not difficult to imagine the scene. However, comparing themselves to the figures in the television serial does something to the way they are perceived or how they manage to make an impression of themselves as having the same 'controversies' as any other middle-aged couple.

## Discussion

We have presented our findings by showing three extracts that each, in their own way, shows how driving and/or having an authorised licence to drive was constructed in interaction as part of self-presentation or impression management.

Driving and having your driver's licence renewed came to play an important role in the way the interviewees presented themselves or performed in the interaction. The theme of driving often occurred as a form of compensation after having revealed frailty or age-related decline. This might relate to how people's identities come to shape the roles they acquire. Having a youthful identity or feeling younger than one's chronological age may encourage someone in later life to hold on to roles that are more often associated with youth than with old age, like the role of driver. As Barrett and Gumber (2019: 4) contend, 'Driving is, after all, viewed as an activity that young and middle-aged, not old people do – or at least not well – according to dominant cultural images of older drivers.'

Norms and values that characterise a specific social and cultural context must be taken into consideration (Coupland, 2009). Prevalent ageing discourses in the Faroe Islands as well as in other Western countries often highlight the negative aspects of



getting old. This has increasingly been contested in the literature, especially within research on people's subjective experiences of growing old. A common feature has been that older adults reject the idea of belonging to the 'old' category and take on the widespread social norms ascribed to people in later life. The self-esteem of ageing individuals is said to be threatened in a culture that values youthfulness at the expense of old age (Westerhof *et al.*, 2003). The pressure of proving oneself to be 'not old' and the extent to which self-esteem is challenged by negative social norms make an older adult engage in impression management to be perceived as 'not old' (Lewis and Neighbor, 2005). As mentioned in the Introduction, several studies have shown that people assert that their chronological age deviates from how they feel (Hurd, 1999; Jones, 2006; Degnen, 2007; Róin, 2015).

In the first extract, Linda used driving as a way to manage a positive impression of herself. After talking about experiencing some limitations with age, she changed the subject on her own accord to that of a 'not that old' woman by proudly saying that she drives. When the interviewer pointed out that driving means freedom, Linda strongly agreed. In today's culture, self-reliance and autonomy are highly valued; freedom to go whenever and wherever you want also supports independence (Coughlin, 2001). For Linda, being independent from others regarding transport helped her maintain positive self-esteem.

In the second extract, Edvard stressed the importance of having his driver's licence. He would be 'finished' if he lost it. The mere thought of not being able to go anywhere when he wanted would have enormous consequences, and he would just have to stay home. This corresponds with findings from other studies that have shown how driving cessation for some people causes symptoms of depression (Fonda *et al.*, 2001), decreases out-of-home engagement and activity levels (Marottoli *et al.*, 2000) and causes fears of being a burden to the family (Coughlin, 2001; Pachana *et al.*, 2017). Regarding the third aspect, however, Edvard managed to downplay his dependence on others when driving in the capital by applying a negative image of his grandson who 'does not do anything anyhow'.

In the third extract with Sara and Hans, by comparing themselves to 'another middle-aged' couple, they take the sting out of the fact that they seldom drive themselves. Hans additionally said that he did not 'bother' to drive, presenting driving as an activity you can choose to do or do without, depending on a personal choice. He could thereby uphold the role of driver even though he seldom drives. Thus, the symbolic value of driving was used to ensure a positive impression of himself. The fact that he had his licence renewed further upheld this impression.

Four women in the study had never taken driving lessons. As it was not until the 1970s that Faroese women really entered the labour market, primarily the fishing industry (Jákupsstovu, 2007; Róin, 2015), the women in this study had mostly been housewives staying at home, living in places with limited road connections and not feeling the need to acquire a driver's licence themselves.

Apart from driving being an important part of the way the interviewees presented themselves, the findings also showed the self-regulation adjustments they used to continue driving safely. Hans had reduced his driving to a minimum and preferred to let his brother drive when necessary. Linda had also adjusted her driving due to night blindness and only drove in daylight. Driving 20 miles to visit her sisters was a 'long' drive for her, which might be perceived as a reduction of distances driven

compared to earlier. Although this self-imposed restriction reduced their mileage, this could cut both ways. A decrease in miles driven could in itself increase the risk of being involved in an accident, the so-called 'low mileage bias' (Hakamies *et al.*, 2002). Edvard said that his driving depended on how he felt, and that he never drove himself in the capital, where there is heavy traffic. Heavy traffic and new traffic installations like roundabouts could create a feeling of insecurity and make older drivers cut down their driving. Edvard never drove in the capital because of the heavy traffic in the city and neither did Kate, who preferred to leave her car at the ferry terminal rather than bring it with her into the capital. This matches findings from a study by Donorfio *et al.* (2008) who found that avoiding heavy traffic in particular was perceived as a kind of self-regulating behaviour among older drivers. Overall, it has been suggested that curtailed driving habits are a limitation imposed by older people on themselves (Eisenhandler, 1990).

Driving cessation should be considered a gradual process where drivers' self-regulation plays an important role (Siren and Haustein, 2015). The drivers in this study had not given up driving, but the self-regulating adjustments might be perceived as the interviewees slowly taking steps towards a driving cessation. However, bringing the impression management lens to this study's findings points to the necessity of understanding the reluctance to give up driving as being not only related to quality of life, mobility and independence, but also being highly related to preserving one's identity as a competent and 'not that old' person. The interviewees in this study shared their spontaneous stories of driving as a form of maintaining a certain social identity. As mentioned in the Introduction, Pachana *et al.* (2017) have argued that one reason why driving cessation is resisted and stressful is because it also implies a change in social identity, from being members of the 'young' group to being part of the less-desirable 'old' group; driving and having a valid driver's licence have been seen as being explicitly linked to a positive sense of identity, while the loss of a driver's licence is linked with taking on an 'older' identity.

## Conclusion

This qualitative study draws attention to the symbolic value of driving or having a valid driver's licence among older adults as part of their impression management. While several studies have focused on the consequences of driving cessation, the present study adds to this body of knowledge by bringing the lens of impression management to this issue.

Our findings indicate a need to support older drivers to continue driving if they wish to do so. It is not only a question of mobility or being independent, but also related to preserving one's social identity in later life.

Although the interviewees in this study did not give in their driver's licences, they were conscious about the necessary limitations to their driving habits caused by different health conditions, such as night blindness and troubles related to coping with heavy traffic.

**Competing interests.** The authors declare no competing interests.

**Ethical standards.** The Septuagenarian follow-up study was approved by the Faroese Ethical Committee and the Faroese Data Protection Board. All the participants provided informed consent. They were informed that they could withdraw at any time for any reason.

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## Appendix

- (.) indicates a short hesitation/pause in talk.  
 Underlining a word means that the speaker puts stress on the word.  
 () indicates the author's comment.  
 [] indicates the participants interrupting each other.  
 (2) means a pause of two seconds.

**Cite this article:** Róin T, Petersen MS, Róin Á (2023). 'I can still drive a car.' Self-presentation in later life and the symbolic value of driving. *Ageing & Society* 1–12. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0144686X23000326>