Part 2: Email review and critique

The comparison that is being made here between the average age of death of World Bank retirees in the last six years and the life expectancy of men and women born in 1955 provided by the Social Security Administration does not seem like a fair one. It appears that the additional life expectancy values for the Social Security Administration estimates are based on cohort life expectancy tables whilst the World Bank averages are period average age of death or period life expectancy. The former assumes that death rate will change over time whilst the latter does not and so it is not unusual that the two measurements should be different. Furthermore, given that death rates do decline over time (at any age) then actually we would expect period life expectancy to be lower than cohort life expectancy.

This is assuming that this is a sample of World Bank US staff which might not be a reasonable assumption given that most of World Bank’s staff are from outside of the US and Canada and they have 120 offices globally. The email does not mention this but it would be important to know if we are to compare World Bank retirees age at death to US life expectancy tables.

Something else that needs to be noted is the presence of outliers in this sample, as highlighted in the email. In fact, the distribution looks to be left skewed due to the presence of low outliers. If outliers are not dealt with by winsorizing, then it might be preferable to use median which is less affected by outliers in the data and thus a more accurate central tendency measure in this case.