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Raymond Jack (ed), Residential Versus Community Care. The Role of Institutions in Welfare Provision. Macmillan Press, 1998, 229 pp. £13.99 pbk, ISBN 0333 666518 X.

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Reviews

Miriam Bernard and Judith Phillips, *The Social Policy of Old Age: Moving into the 21st Century*. Centre for Policy on Ageing, London, 1998, 328 pp. pbk. £14, ISBN 1 901097 005.

This excellent collection celebrates the Golden Jubilee of the non-governmental Centre for Policy on Ageing, formerly the National Corporation for the Care of Old People. The CPA is well known for its research, publications and pivotal role in the promotion of debate and dissemination of information on social policies and provisions affecting older people. *The Social Policy of Old Age* offers a reflective and topical overview of a range of policies generic to the well-being of Britain's senior citizens.

The first section of the book places the issues in their historical context and addresses some traditional concerns in the field – health and social care services, education, housing and residential care, work and retirement, pensions and financial security in old age. Part Two concentrates on issues which have achieved prominence in the last two decades – informal care of older people, questions of gender, race and sexuality, the growth of pensioners' organisations and pensioners' action, efforts to empower older people, health care rationing, non-treatment and euthanasia. The final chapters focus on the future, one feisty contribution being written from the perspective of a very elderly woman (Lady Simey), distinguished for her continuing role in public life, not least in her Liverpool locality. There is an audit by Maria Evandrou of the current baby boomers' expectations for their old age and, lastly, the editors' overview of possible future directions for policy and practice.

The book contains much evidence as to the growing diversity of the elderly population of Britain, though as Karl Atkins documents, knowledge about those from ethnic minority groups is sparse. That longer-lived women are typically at risk of an impoverished old age as 'lone' pensioners is well established, as Arber and Ginn illustrate. Theirs is the one paper to touch upon transport problems: poor health and poverty are compounded by this being the last generation wherein many women have never learnt to drive. It is still part of the culture to denigrate women (and older) drivers.

Contrary to ill-informed media statements, most pensioners are not well off, being heavily reliant on state pensions, as Falkingham illustrates in a concise paper on financial insecurity. It is, in addition, very elderly 'lone' women who are most reliant on means-tested income support. The difficulties which such claimants experience in attempting to meet capital costs via the Social Fund (a state means-tested loans system) is one pertinent issue which the book does not address. Peace and Johnson emphasise that while ever more pensioners are owner-occupiers, this can be problematic for elderly people who cannot afford repairs. Again it is lone women who characteristically end up in residential care. Issues around inheritance and the requirement that the value of a home

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be taken into account in calculating residential/nursing home fees are discussed in Twigg's excellent chapter on informal care.

The Social Policy of Old Age documents (see Dalley) enormous changes in health and social care arising from the move to a mixed economy of welfare in the 1980s and 90s. Its effects are keenly felt by pensioners, many forced, as Phillipson shows, to retire before pensionable age. Men and women leave the labour market to act as carers, with detrimental effects on their pensions record. Several contributors comment on the pernicious effects of ageism (against which the Labour government refuses to legislate), including Howse in his most useful paper on ethical dilemmas in the health field. Accounts of the development of geriatric medicine and social work illustrate ageism as practised by 'professionals'.

As Bornat reveals, pensioners do have a history of organising themselves. Though (see Midwinter) they participate rather little in formal education, the member-run University of the Third Age flourishes, perhaps mainly among the better off and mobile. No mention is made of Saga, a hugely successful commercial organisation for those aged 50 plus, supplying a range of services. Included in its otherwise very traditional monthly magazine is splendid material and advice for campaigning pensioners, with notable victories notched up. Will the new generation of better-qualified and less-deferential pensioners be more vociferous? Dunning contributes an interesting paper on advocacy and empowerment.

As an academic who now receives as well as writes about pensions and belongs to pensioners' groups, I found a resonance in many of the points raised in this book. All contributions are freshly written and replete with current references. The distinguished roster of academic and practitioner authors spans a huge age range; they are, without exception, specialists in their fields. Miriam Bernard and Judith Phillips have done a good job editing this collection, which should be of use to a wide readership at home and abroad. They rightly conclude that what Britain needs for its 'ageing society' are integrated social policies.

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Raymond Jack (ed), *Residential Versus Community Care. The Role of Institutions in Welfare Provision*. Macmillan Press, 1998, 229 pp. £13.99 pbk, ISBN 0333 666518 X.

In this book Jack has brought together a collection of discursive, rather than research-based papers aimed at overcoming dualistic views of residential and community care, to claw back what is positive and necessary about institution-based care for certain groups of people.

Many of the authors confront a variety of issues raised by policy agendas which have resulted in the closure of psychiatric hospitals and NHS continuing-care beds, an increasingly narrow definition of need arising from health problems and an over-reliance on the benefits and availability of community care. Others are concerned with the practicalities involved in making institution-based care humane and positive environments.

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In his own chapter Jack argues that the concept of institution has been too narrowly understood and that institution-based care has been constituted as if it lies outside the communities in which it is located. Jack suggests that the problems with residential care are not generated by residential care per se, but by a combination of poverty, society and policies which have attempted to sequestrate rather than integrate the needy and the infirm. Jack argues that the problems of institutionalisation, in terms of lack of choice, abuse and induced passivity, cannot be redressed just by change to the internal service system, but by making the institutions' boundaries permeable to the wider community. He argues that by focusing on what institutions provide, and by re-evaluating the relationship between residential and community care, residential care can be reconstructed as a feature of caring communities.

Brandon takes up the theme of the boundedness of institutions, and examines the evolutionary process by which social care became separated from the communities in which it is located. Brandon suggests that residential care is a form of sequestration of people who are needy, which has arisen as an effect of its historical roots; that is, that provision of social care lay with monks and was located in monasteries, and as such was sequestered from day to day secular life.

Davies, Shemmings, Jones, Moriarty and Levin address the differing role of residential care in terms of providing shelter with care, social networks, respite care and support for the dying. Like Brandon, Shemmings discusses how residential care has been constituted as a social process which attempts to sequestrate people, such as the terminally ill, who are shunned by society. Shemmings's essay points to the relation between the historical character of residential care, and wider socio-cultural relations. Davies describes and argues for a new form of residential care, the retirement community, which provides shelter and care, together with the benefits of individual choice and communality.

Redfern addresses the problem of quality in continuing care, and debates who should act as primary carer for older people with health and social needs. She examines whether there is a role for qualified professional nursing, and argues that qualified nurses should not be replaced by support workers if standards are to be kept high. Redfern connects professional nurses' abandonment of their role in continuing care of older people, with what is a false division: the division between health, and social or personal care. Redfern recommends that support staff should not be in charge of all basic nursing and suggests that support workers model themselves on the 'good' nurse who brings together holistic perspectives of the social and health needs of older people.

Finally, the third phase of the book addresses how and when institutions do and do not work, and the future of residential care. Kellaher suggests the ways in which institutions can be organised to preserve individuality and self, but in relation to what is achievable. She suggests that structures and policies which attempt to model residential care on images of home and family living may confuse residents and staff alike. Rather, to get maximum benefit, Kellaher suggests that structures and policy should aim at balancing the interests of the individual in terms of privacy and personal space, with promotion of an ethos of shared living. Eastman's chapter provides a practical

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guide to preventing those aspects of institutional organisation which lead to abuse, and lists indicators of potential for abuse.

The book lacks an overarching logic, which may be an effect of trying to cover too much ground. Dividing the book into sections, with an introduction to each section bringing out the connections between essays would have been helpful. But our main criticism of the book is that it hedges the research issues to some extent. While Jack (and others) contest earlier work on institutions as unsystematic, it is hard to discover the primary, rigorous and systematic research upon which much of the debate which the book offers is based. Indeed, many of the authors seem to suggest that the dangers of depersonalisation arise where institutions are totalising, and sequestrating, and that in making their boundaries permeable, to the wider community and to surveillance coming from audit and other managerial technologies, much of the institutionalising effects of residential care can be avoided.

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Heather Clark, Sue Dyer and Jo Horwood, *That Bit of Help: the High Value of Low Level Preventative Services for Older People*. The Policy Press, Bristol, 1998, 72 pp., £13.95, ISBN 1 86134 118 0.
Judith Healy and Stella Yarrow, *Family Matters: Parents Living with Children in Old Age*. The Policy Press, Bristol, 1997, 98 pp., ISBN 1 86134 976 1.

The UK Joseph Rowntree Foundation is committed to the dissemination of research it commissions, and generally requires projects to produce an accessible research report. These two publications are part of such a process and are clearly designed to appeal to students, academics, policy-makers and the research community. A short summary of their findings, indeed details of all JRF research may also be located electronically, while the UK social work magazine *Community Care*, associated with the broad series of JRF publications in this area, also provides another outlet to an audience of social work practitioners and their managers.

This context is important in bringing research to the attention of a broad audience in a relatively speedy fashion. It is specific to British readerships and directed to service and professional organisations rather than gerontological communities. An emphasis on policy relevance is obvious rather than theoretical development.

The two reports considered here demonstrate these strengths. The first, *Family Matters*, can be placed in the context of the UK Royal Commission on the Future of Long Term Care for the Elderly (due to report in 1999), but also in the long-standing political fears and uncertainties about the ability or willingness of families to care for older relatives, once alternatives are available. Healy and Yarrow address the misconceptions about demography in the UK context, pointing out that, while independence appears the most

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common living state among older people and residential care is a minority experience, a small proportion of older people, particularly very elderly widows, move to the households of their children. Thus while institutional care is an increasingly common experience in late life, over one in ten women aged 80 years and over live with their sons or daughters.

Why this should be so forms the major focus of their study, which draws on in-depth interviews with older people who are co-resident, and the sons and daughters involved. A total of 23 households was studied, mainly white, middle class, owner occupiers. Healy and Yarrow used welfare organisations to locate such families, and acknowledge that this may have produced a set of respondents where there were significant levels of frailty or illness among the older persons and a likely involvement or positive engagement with services. A different perspective on co-residence might have been derived from other sources. The abuse literature, for example, points to risk factors associated with co-residence when it is the younger son or relative who has dependence on an older female relative for housing, income or access to substances.

These problems are becoming well documented and influential in professional circles, so Healy and Yarrow's focus on functional family co-residence in the main provides a useful counterbalance. They organise their data into sections on the decisions and processes of moving in, the accommodations made in staying together, and attitudes to the management of relationships. This latter section conveys a sense of ambivalence on both sides of the generational co-residence, outlining a sense of the dynamics between individuals and changes in roles over time.

This research ends with policy recommendations appropriate for service providers, such as access to information, and to policy makers, and increased support for working carers. These are relevant to its intended readership and may be usefully taken up by advocacy groups. Hopefully, other written material will emanate from the research to consider broader theoretical and methodological questions.

The second research report, *That Bit of Help* stands in similar format, again representing a speedy and accessible dissemination document. Clearly relevant to the evaluation of the UK reforms in community care provision, the research explores the meaning of home and independence to older people with domestic assistance as its main focus. Such terms are frequently encountered in discussions of care but Clark and colleagues employ the term 'help' as representing instrumental assistance in the context of affective relationships. To older people, interviewed in the course of this research, the home help service embodied this service.

As with the previous research discussed, the methods for this study were largely opportunistic interviewing. Fifty-one older people, mainly from an urban area but including some from a rural setting and a conurbation, were interviewed and their stories form a number of cases studies. These data are compared, by means of discussion with service personnel, with concepts which appeared significant, particularly independence and security. A gendered analysis is used to argue that older women were more likely than older men to perceive adequate standards of household work to be linked to their own feelings of self-esteem, well-being and public presentation as competent adults.

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As many readers will recognise the cleanliness of net curtains for many UK older people appears to be symbolic of this status.

This research portrays what is deemed to be low-level domestic assistance as highly valued by older people in helping to maintain their independence and construct their identities. This finding is placed in contrast to the targeting of personal care services to those at high risk of residential or nursing care. A more sustained discussion might have helped develop the costings and efficiencies of increasing low-level services. Moreover, such research also confirms the value of being more explicit about the concept of prevention to analyse what is being prevented, and the chances and costs of such efforts. Child protection and child care services have similarly begun to embark on such debates.

These two reports bring debates and research to a wide readership. Both convey a sense of reporting the views of older people directly. Although small scale in scope both research projects address specific policy issues. Although UK focused, they may be of broader relevance.

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Martha Alter Chen (ed), *Widows in India: social neglect and public action*. Sage, New Delhi, 1998, 455 pp. hbk £35 ISBN 0 7619 9248 0.

Widowhood in India is experienced by women in all age groups, primarily because of a higher average age difference between husband and wife than in the Western world, combined with high male mortality rates. However, women who survive beyond their reproductive years outlive men and, as in almost all societies, there is an increasing proportion of widowed women in the older population. This book evolved from two gatherings in Bangalore in 1994: a workshop and a conference, which focused attention on widowhood as a social problem and aimed at promoting public action and policies in support of widows in India. The contributions to the volume, most of which were presented at the conference, are grouped into six sections.

The first section explores the dominant ideological construction of widowhood in India, as well as regional variations in customary norms regarding widowhood. These practices include levirate (remarriage of the widow to the late husband's brother), societal exclusion (or social death) and property rights of women, as differentially experienced by widows within the wider ideology of gender and caste relationships. This section highlights the diversity in Indian culture but demonstrates that life is problematic for women without men in an overwhelmingly patriarchal society, regardless of local customs. The following section deals with the demographics of widowhood and includes chapters on mortality and ageing in widowhood. The social, health and economic deprivation of widowhood is revealed by a pan-Indian survey which shows that mortality rates are 85 per cent higher for widowed women than married women over the age of 45. In 1981, 64 per cent of women

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over the age of 60 were widowed and these represented 53 per cent of the widowed women in India. This proportion increased by 12 per cent between 1961 and 1981 (p. 193). Of the widows over the age of 60, between 20 per cent and 50 per cent were widowed under the age of 40, depending on caste, rural or urban location and income.

These two initial sections set the scene for the exposition and discussion on four key areas for public policy and action in support of widows: property rights, social security, employment, and social identity. There is recognition that there are not only substantial regional cultural differences, but also differences between modern policy, customary law and actual practice. Central to the argument is that the single most important factor for ensuring economic security and empowerment for widows in India, is effective command over property. The book concludes by setting up recommendations which suggest directions of future research and action on housing, land, jobs and children's education. Particular importance is attached to the gap between the theory and practice of law, and how the divergence could be reduced. A positive aspect of an otherwise unrelentingly pessimistic read is the report on the growing number of women's groups and organisations which are advising and supporting women in the pursuit of their legislative rights to property.

A book about widows in India is an ambitious project and, at times, I found it rather heavy going, principally because of my poor knowledge of cultural differences and the vocabulary used. Also, considering the size of the volume, the index section is disappointingly sparse. Nevertheless, the 20 chapters in the book provide a variety of styles and methodologies, from national statistical survey findings to case studies of widows in small rural villages. The plight of widows reflects the more general position of women in India and confirms the paradoxical situation of a highly marginalised population who are at the same time considered problematic by policy makers. The strength of the book is its comprehensive treatment of an entirely neglected area of study which exposes the complexities of cultural differences. However, virtually no mention is made of Muslim, Parsee or Christian widows in India, where property laws may differ. This book would be an essential text for anyone involved in working with older women from Hindu ethnic minorities in the UK as it provides valuable insights into the ideologies which drive societal attitudes to women.

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Finnegan Alford-Cooper, *For Keeps: Marriages that Last a Lifetime*, M. E. Sharpe Inc. New York, 1998, 210pp, hbk $59.95 ISBN 0 7656 0122 2, pbk $19.95 ISBN 0 7656 0123 0.

Finnegan Alford-Cooper's book examines couples married for 50 or more years based on her analysis of the Long Island long term marriage survey. Postal surveys were completed by a non-random sample of 576 couples with more in-depth interviews with 60 of the couples utilising a biographical approach to elicit informants' self definition and descriptions of their married

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lives. The non-random sample reflects limitations frequently reported in previous studies, that is, participants had higher than average educational and income levels for their cohort, appear to be predominantly white and, were located within a specifically defined geographical area.

The opening chapter comprises a description of the methodology used and an overview of the theories which informed the study. Thereafter, the book is organised into five chapters which focus on current contexts and biographical retrospections of informants' married lives, and include a discussion of their views of younger couples' approaches to marriage, as compared to their own. Some use is made of statistical analysis of survey material, but the main body of the text focuses on the qualitative data generated by the detailed interviews.

The survey instrument was newly designed for this research, but utilized questions drawn from a number of earlier studies examining long-term marriage. The reliability of the instrument is therefore, not yet established. Both questionnaires, which I found useful to be able to refer to, are included as appendices to the text.

The author provides the reader with a brief overview of some of the published research relating to long-term marriage. Two areas are highlighted where research has failed to reach a consensus, namely, the variability in the durations of marriage defined as long-term, and, differences of opinion as to whether marital satisfaction increases, decreases or remains the same over the marital course. Other critical issues in published research are not addressed. For example, research approaching the topic from an atheoretical stance (Askham 1995); diverse operational definitions of terms such as marital satisfaction (Sporakowski and Axelson 1984); reliance on married people rather than married couples (Herman 1994) and the pre-dominant use of cross sectional methodologies (Brubaker 1990).

Finnegan Alford-Cooper's study is located within a theoretical framework, utilising symbolic interactionism, continuity theory and a lifecourse perspective. She highlights the importance of the notion of individuals actively participating in their social world and jointly and individually constructing marital identities. Whilst the discussion of theoretical concepts is brief, the author does reference her text which will enable the interested reader to pursue the topics in greater depth.

A key strength of the book is the focus on the narrative of informants which constitutes a significant departure from the tendency of previously reported research to focus on quantitative methodologies. Informants are usefully located in the historical and social contexts in which their relationships began. For example, she draws important distinctions between couples married in the 1930s during the Depression compared with couples who married in the 1940s.

Whilst the chapters track an organised, chronological approach through marital biographies they, at times, provide a 'broad brush' rather than in-depth exploration. For example, the impact of World War II is explored, but some areas are dealt with, perhaps inevitably, in a cursory fashion. A section entitled 'camp followers' suggests that wives 'often' followed their husbands on postings, but constitutes five lines of commentary and two quotations. This begs the question how 'often' is often?

Overall, the analysis of narrative substantially reflects the predetermined

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themes apparent in the interviews. These themes, such as conflict resolution, appear to be relevant to the nature of marriage relationships and, again, the narrative excerpts make interesting reading. The author has not significantly imposed her own analysis on the narratives which, at one level, allows the informants to speak for themselves but, at another, leaves some tantalising questions unanswered. For example, she indicates that several less happily married wives said that they were still married as a result of economic dependence. This however is not unpicked in terms of the way dependency impacts negatively on marriage relationships, power differentials in marriage relationships or, a comparison between unhappy dependent women and their possibly happy partners.

Alford-Cooper presents statistical correlations established from the survey instrument, but often without comment or speculation. Why might women rely more on avoidance and the passage of time to resolve conflict? What is the significance, beyond a statistical one, of Catholic and Protestant women reporting a decline in sexual interest and Jewish women not?

Finally, I felt some disappointment that the researchers were rendered invisible from the research process in the book. For example, there is no comment about the ethical, political and personal problems likely to confront the researcher in a project of this nature. Based on her theoretical assumption that informants are active participants in their social world, we can assume that this equally applies to researchers who are likely to contribute to the construction of the narrative accounts. Again, there is no commentary in relation to the participation of researchers in the making of the narrative accounts.

Overall, I enjoyed reading the book. It is a significant departure from previously reported quantitative research perspectives. No doubt too, the extensive transcript materials which have been archived, will provide plentiful opportunities for future analysis and research.

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Meredith Minkler and Carroll L. Estes (eds), *Critical Gerontology: Perspectives from Political and Moral Economy*, Baywood Publishing Company, Inc., Amityville, New York, 1999, 390 pp., hbk $56.00, ISBN 0-89503-184-1, pbk $36.00 ISBN 089503-185-X.

The goals of the book are twofold. As the authors explain, 'first, the book attempts to complement, update, and extend *Critical Perspectives on Aging* by applying a political economy perspective to the analysis of such diverse problems and issues as the complex interplay of race, class, gender, and ageing; the transformation of health and welfare policies for the old; the gendered nature of work and retirement; and the myths and realities of "senior power"'. The second goal lies in theory building. From a lifecourse perspective, special attention is dedicated to ageing and gender, areas that till the recent past have been disregarded.

The book begins by examining the theoretical approach of the political economy of ageing. In Chapter 1 Estes emphasises the commitment of the political economy perspectives by highlighting the influence of the structures in shaping the different ageing processes and experiences of ageing.

Because of the multiperspectival nature of political economy, Minkler and Cole suggest in Chapter 2 an integration of related conceptual approaches. They introduce and analyse the concept and uses of moral economy as a means to enrich the political economy of ageing. As it is noted by Minkler 'While political economy focuses in particular on the social structural context of aging, moral economy is primarily concerned with the related context of popular consensus defining norms of reciprocity as these affect the old and resource allocation across age groups. The explicit integration of a moral economy perspective within a broader political economy framework, therefore, makes possible a richer and more thorough analysis than either can achieve independently' (p. 2).

Diverse and crucial topics are also investigated. The current alarmist public (political?) concern about the 'problems' and 'burden' of an ageing population is discussed and challenged in Part II. A different perspective is presented along the four chapters that highlight the close interdependence of generations. In the last chapter a critical analysis of the myths and realities of the political power held by American elderly people is developed. Conventional political perspectives explain the continuity of Social Security and Medicare programmes, focusing on age-based electoral bloc voting or interest group power models. On the contrary, the political economy perspective emphasises the stratification of interests fixed in welfare state social programmes. The durability of Social Security and Medicare programmes is understood from a political economy point of view to be a result of the interaction of 'political institutions, economic relations, elite and citizen political actors of all ages [that] shape political outcomes affecting those programs' (p. 112).

Part III focuses on a question that has become an increasingly crucial issue for social and health policies, namely the provision of health and social services in a changing and ageing society. The social construction of elderly people as 'problems' and 'different' contributes to create social images of elderly people

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and ageing that lead to fear of them. At the same time, and partly as a consequence, as Estes explains, the 'aging enterprise… assures that the needs of the aged will be processed and treated as a commodity' (p. 136). Health care and long-term care in the US and Canada are examined under the current retrenchment and budget cuts in Chapters 8 and 9. In the following chapters the different options for restructuring Medicare in the US are discussed, as well as the poor quality of care provided in nursing homes.

The impact of race, class and gender on ageing and ageing policies are examined in Part IV. The three chapters included in it evaluate the array of public policies concerning minority elders, the role of care received for and provided by elderly people, especially women, in relation to the evolution of welfare state policies. The last chapter criticises the traditional methods used in the study of marginalised groups, as well as the gerontology, because of its weakened theoretical development on race, class and gender in relation to ageing.

Part V is dedicated to the analysis of work, retirement and social security and the concept – and practical consequences – of 'productive ageing'. In its first chapter poverty in old age for most women is explained as a result of the problems and choices faced earlier in their lives. Phillipson states in Chapter 17 that retirement appears and is developed and then constrained within an industrial society. With the socio-economic changes which occurred by the late 1960s, the transition toward advanced modernity 'is itself leading to a new social construction of later life' (p. 322). In contrast to the conventional discourse about retirement, the institution of retirement might be seen as offering 'significant opportunities for social actors to explore and reshape biographies' (p. 323). At the same time the experience of different forms of discrimination – coming together with the emancipation of work – 'become commonplace as retirement reverts to being a social risk rather than a social right' (p. 323). He concludes by stating that appropriate resources in both ideas and financial support are needed in order to achieve the goal of emancipation when leaving work. An analysis of the evolution of the welfare state as well as the changes in social security in the USA are also developed in the two following chapters.

In the last chapter of the book Martha Holstein makes us aware of the fact that the concept of productive ageing, culturally embedded in the equated concept of paid work, may blame older women who do not conform to this new image of old age. She considers that 'given the fundamental inequalities that still mark our society, women are more likely than men to be practically affected by a political reinterpretation of what it means to live in a productive aging society' (p. 365). Imagining a productive ageing scenario, she states that if the work place will continue to reflect the place that women and older people occupy in the society, other means and ways of contributing to the wellbeing of others and of gaining social approbation, will be disregarded and undervalued. Furthermore, all these ideas might supply arguments for a delegitimation of health and social policies for elderly people.

In sum, the book provides a vast array of issues and ideas on gerontology, mostly based on, although sometimes partly opposed to, the moral and political economy framework. The five parts highlight the main current policy

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concerns, very often controversial. Therefore, the book arrives at a very opportune moment because it enlightens the current debates about an ageing society.

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