



# Later Life, Gender and Ethnicity: Changing Theory for Social Policy Research

**Author/Contributor:**

Wilson, Gail

**Publication details:**

Working Paper No. 94  
SPRC Discussion Paper  
0733416861 (ISBN)  
1447-8978 (ISSN)

**Publication Date:**

1998

**DOI:**

<https://doi.org/10.26190/unsworks/226>

**License:**

<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/au/>

Link to license to see what you are allowed to do with this resource.

Downloaded from <http://hdl.handle.net/1959.4/34049> in <https://unsworks.unsw.edu.au> on 2023-02-01

**LATER LIFE, GENDER  
AND ETHNICITY  
CHANGING THEORY FOR  
SOCIAL POLICY  
RESEARCH**

by Gail Wilson

---

SPRC Discussion Paper No. 94  
*December 1998*

ISSN 1037 2741  
ISBN 7334 1686 1

Dr Gail Wilson lectures in social policy and ageing in the Department of Social Policy and Administration at the London School of Economics. The author would like to thank Peter Saunders, Michael Fine and all their colleagues at the Social Policy Research Centre for their hospitality and support while she was writing this paper.

The Social Policy Research Centre (formerly the Social Welfare Research Centre) was established in January 1980 under an Agreement between the University of New South Wales and the Commonwealth Government. In accordance with the Agreement the Centre is operated by the University as an independent unit within the University. The Director of the Centre is responsible to the Vice-Chancellor and receives advice in formulating the Centre's research agenda from a Management Board.

SOCIAL POLICY RESEARCH CENTRE DISCUSSION PAPERS are intended as a forum for the publication of selected research papers on research within the Centre, or commissioned by the Centre, for discussion and comment in the research community and/or welfare sector prior to more formal publication. Limited copies of each DISCUSSION PAPER will be available on a first-come, first-served basis from the Publications Officer, Social Policy Research Centre, University of New South Wales, Sydney NSW 2052 [tel: (02) 9385 7800]. A full list of DISCUSSION PAPERS can be found at the back of this DISCUSSION PAPER.

The series is indebted to Diana Encel for her continuing editorial contribution.

As with all of the Centre's publications, the views expressed in this DISCUSSION PAPER do not reflect any official position on the part of the Centre.

Tony Eardley  
Editor

## **Abstract**

This paper considers how developments in theories of gender and ethnicity might contribute to policy research on aspects of ageing and later life. It argues that existing research on these topics relies too much on chronological age as the key descriptor for 'old' people, and thus provides an inadequate knowledge base for emancipatory policy, practice and theory building. The paper examines the range of discourses commonly brought to discussions of ageing and later life, which tend often to disempower or render invisible certain groups, including older women and older people of other cultures. It also explores the ways in which older men and women resist these exercises of power over them by refusing to conform to stereotypes of behaviour or identity. This leads to potential conflicts between notions of universal rights and the need to take account of diversity and difference - a dilemma which might be resolved by developing an approach based on capabilities. The paper concludes by arguing that research on older people needs to be more eclectic in its use of social theory, drawing on developments in other branches of social science, and it calls for greater effective participation in such research by older people from all walks of life.

# 1 Introduction

The aim of this paper is to consider how developments in theories of gender and ethnicity might contribute to policy research on different aspects of later life. It seems unlikely that any 'grand theory' of old age or ageing will be useful for most social policy research, but I suggest below that much existing research could benefit from taking account of a wider range of theoretical approaches or stances. My aim is to raise issues or aspects of theory that could possibly contribute more to research in social gerontology, rather than to advocate specifically for any one approach. Some topics such as the 'body' are therefore mentioned in passing while others are covered in rather more detail.

It is still possible to collect data on 'the elderly' without much attention to anything except chronological age. Even today there are instances where 'information' on older people is offered with no breakdown between men and women, and older 'people' are assumed to be all the same (see Gibson, 1996). There are cases where this approach to knowledge can be justified (see below) but in general it is inadequate. It results in biased and incomplete data. For example, older pensioners consist of men with, on average, higher pensions paid out for a shorter time and women with, on average, lower pensions paid out for a longer time. The mix will vary with populations and pension systems, but any serious discussion needs to be able to take account of the differences. Without an understanding of such basic gender differences we have a poor knowledge base for policy, practice or theory building.

These gender-free, 'common sense' approaches to data collection appear atheoretical but are examples of implicit theory. The implicit theory behind an age-based approach to data is that chronological age is an adequate descriptor for all 'old' people and that gender can safely be ignored. The problem has been well summarised by Rubinstein:

If there are so many culturally-based gender differences between men and women in late life (in social stressors relating to longevity, emotionality, experience of illness, modes of relating to other people, income, past experiences as culturally structured in the life course, to name a few), how can

these be ignored? Yet we frequently talk of the elderly as a uniform or discrete group. (Rubinstein, 1990: 116)

No single grand theory is going to be relevant for all older men and women. We therefore need a theoretical stance that allows the generation of relevant knowledge and data. 'Relevant' here implies knowledge which improves understanding and helps to formulate policies that will help rather than harm older men and women, as individuals and as groups. This paper does not pretend to have the answers but aims to raise questions about the way we theorise later life. More specifically I wish to look at some possible contributions from feminist and postmodernist scholarship.

So far, much writing on both old age and the condition of women has focused on defining and measuring aspects of disadvantage (see Heycox, 1997; and Gibson, 1998, for a more detailed discussion). This is hardly surprising when so much disadvantage is still deemed to be natural or normal, and hence barely recognisable as disadvantage. However, there are problems with this approach. Most women, whether old or young, do not spend their lives with disadvantage as their primary identity. It follows that a theoretical framework which takes account of the knowledge and understanding of those being researched needs to do more than represent older women (or men) as the sum of their disadvantages. This, I would suggest, is one aspect of a principled stance that prioritises the words and meanings of those being studied over existing academic theory when designing research projects and interpreting data.

As a first step we can draw parallels between two less contested discourses - sex and old age (chronological), which are apparently emotion-free and belong to natural science - and two highly contested discourses - gender and old age (socially constructed), both areas which excite strong and emotions and which are the province of social science. Old age appears in both categories because we have no vocabulary for distinguishing chronological age from socially constructed age as we have for sex and gender. In other words we can see older men and women as victims of ageism but ageism has not been developed into a theoretical construct in the same way as patriarchy or racism.

From the point of view of natural science, sex can be defined in biological terms. It then has the aura of value-free, objective and above all emotion-free knowledge. Old age, too, passes as a scientific construct: ageing is a function of time and time can be measured. Organisms undergo physical changes from birth to death and some of these ageing processes appear to be universal and recognised by all cultures. Caution is necessary, however, because social science has continually shown that the 'universal', 'natural' or 'obvious' are the products of culture and environment and only appear to be universal. Gender theory (see below) has established that differences in sex are less natural than is usually assumed, either in terms of boundaries or of content.

However, it seems important to accept that old age (chronological) exists and will be experienced in some form or other by those who live long enough, even though most aspects of it are social or cultural rather than natural. The important question for any definition of old age is when is 'long enough', scientifically speaking. There is no fixed answer, but medicine and demography are usually willing to impose a boundary which is then deemed 'scientific'. (See Wilson, 1997, for a critique of demography and economic knowledge.) Social gerontology may need a different approach if the 'scientific' is not to be confused with the 'social'.

## **2 Discourses, Deconstruction and Contestability**

The underlying assumption of the following discussion is that what passes for knowledge is inherently contestable, i.e. there are no 'facts', only perceptions based on different power relations and embodied in different discourses. These discourses can be contested and deconstructed in terms of the power relations which produce and benefit from them, the knowledge selected and the boundaries placed upon the definitions used. The term 'contested' indicates that there is disagreement, either overt or covert, and that the basis of the disagreement may come from differences in power, outcomes, aims or values.

Dominant discourses are those that rationalise and underpin existing power structures which are normally ageist, sexist, racist or elitist. Such

dominant discourses take many forms and are resisted in many different ways. One aim of theory is to present a framework which makes it easier to deconstruct dominant discourse and to present or give voice to alternative discourses. This can be done by contesting discourses in terms of the 'facts' they present, for example, the classification of all those of pension age as old. There is also a need to deconstruct dominant discourses so that we ask not only whose discourse are we presenting or reading and how it conflicts or aligns with others' perceptions of the same area, but also why the discourse exists, what power relations are involved, who benefits from the way it has developed and the way it is presented, and who benefits from maintaining it as it is.

Dominant discourses such as ageism are not monolithic but come in many forms. For example, Disney (1996: 108) sees elders as unwitting instruments of social improvement. After pointing out that there is no 'old age crisis' in pensions or pension entitlements, he goes on to say that population ageing is useful anyway because it draws attention to the faults which economists see in Western health and social security systems, even though these faults are not caused by population ageing. Such an approach ignores the harm done by ageist discourses, which present older men and women as a burden on the young.

### **Social Construction**

The socially constructed aspects of old age have not received the same attention as the socially constructed aspects of gender (see below), either at the level of individual ageing or in an analysis of the social structures involved. Discourses exist which contest various definitions of elders - as pensioners, or as being a burden on society, or as individually to blame for dependency rather than socially structured into dependence (Estes, 1979; Townsend, 1981, 1986; Walker, 1980, 1981, 1983; Phillipson, 1982). These discourses tend to be presented as assertions of alternative truths to the dominant discourses, or as campaigning platforms. For example, alternative discourses point out that old age, popularly defined as decrepitude, does not begin at pension age, and not all cultures see 'old' when applied to people as insulting.



The great achievement of gender theory has been to show that differences between men and women that were assumed to be natural or scientific are social artefacts, and also that they can both express or conceal relations of power. The weakness is that gender theory has concentrated very heavily on younger age groups. Although it is common to read that gendered differences vary culturally and historically, differences relating to age are much less often mentioned (see Arber and Ginn, 1995; Gibson, 1996 and 1998, for alternative discourses). Midlife Western feminists have tended to ignore the differences and similarities between younger and older women, apparently assuming that disadvantages or oppressions which are present in early or midlife remain unchanged or worsen (as in some respects they do, especially in Western countries) (Arber and Ginn, 1991).

The emphasis on disadvantage was essential in the early stages of theorising gender and is still important, but it has now been recognised that a uniform view of gender and disadvantage ignores the clearly documented realities of ageing for women in most developing countries, where their power increases with age (Kertzer and Keith, 1984; Keith, 1994). Even in the west, contrary theories have been proposed. For example Kertzer and Keith in their discussion of theories point to Gutmann who, they say, identified ‘a universal psychological cross over effect’ (Kertzer and Keith, 1984: 28) caused by ageing women becoming more autonomous, competitive, aggressive and instrumental while men become more passive, expressive and dependent. As anthropologists, Kertzer and Keith do not support this universalising approach, but they note the increased power of elders and especially of older women in many societies.

### **Invisibility**

As feminist scholars have made clear, dominant discourses operate in terms of what is not mentioned as well as what is mentioned. Much discourse about ‘people’ makes younger and midlife women invisible but it can also eliminate older men and women from normal discourse. The virtual absence of older men and women from literature and policy on economic development crosses both sexes and results in the invisibility of the vital contributions to child care and food production made by older

people of both sexes, but mainly by older women in developing countries. A similar situation exists in public health where targets for reducing death rates from, say, breast cancer in the UK refer only to women under 65. Older men also suffer from the same invisibility - targets for reducing 'premature deaths from heart attack among men' for example, means deaths of men under 65. The implicit discourse here is first, men's deaths matter most although death rates from heart attack are very high among older women, and second, that men who die at 65 or over are not deemed to have died prematurely even though average life expectancy for men is well over 70.

As with public health, a gender blind view, combined with ageism, leads to poor policy and service development. For example, the use of the generic gender-free term 'elder abuse' in the dominant ideology surrounding the abuse of older men and women has made it easier to frame policies that take virtually no account of gender, despite the literature on domestic violence which has identified so much violence as men's abuse of women. In later life gendered power relations may alter, but elder abuse within the family is still largely the abuse of older women by older or younger men (Whittaker, 1995; Pritchard, 1992; Wilson, 1993a).

Older men and women are also largely absent from dominant Western discourse on the family (see, for example, Deven et al., 1998). This European review of research on the relationship between families and the work place found that throughout Europe 'the family' was normally a two-generation entity as far as researchers were concerned. The second concern of the report was with the family burden of caring for older relatives. In this case, the family is seen as a two-generation nuclear unit stressed or even threatened by the outside burden of the older generation.

One purpose of theory, as formulated in this paper, is to show that the dominant discourse is not the only one and to give credibility and visibility to alternative patterns of behaviour. Thus those Western families that integrate older relatives closely into their lives or family structures illustrate the diversity which exists in all cultures. They offer the opportunity to uncover alternative discourses. In other words, a theoretical approach which links older men and women to the family via the mechanism of care is both ageist and inadequate. It also belongs to an ageist discourse which is not culturally universal even though it is

dominant in most Western countries. In cultures where older men and women are seen as essential and often very powerful members of their families, no theorisation which omitted them would have much general relevance to a study of family life. Second, as feminist scholars have pointed out, the family is not an undifferentiated unit but a site of gender relations and so of expressions of power. Family care is care by women in the overwhelming majority of cases (Finch and Groves, 1983). This is not to deny the reality of care by men, but simply to make sure that care is theorised in gendered terms rather than leaving the different modes and processes of care and the power relations involved gender-free and invisible (see summaries in Twigg and Atkin, 1994).

The relative absence of older men and women from debates on caring has meant that it is still possible to see younger generation caregivers as wholly disempowered, first by their own love and guilt and second by social expectations and stereotypes which give them no option but to care. A more differentiated theoretical framework allows other sets of views and power relations to be explored and so to show that older men and particularly older women, often experience care as control. Many fight a continuous (though largely hidden) battle to maintain their independence from children who either mean well or wish to streamline their input of care (Gibson, 1998). There is also the point well put by Deven et al., that:

... in the English language 'care' is not all burden and dependency. There is a sense in which to care for someone means to love them, which means -at least- to feel emotional attachment towards them, to seek their material and emotional wellbeing - and, often, for such feelings and wishes to be reciprocal with a concomitant exchange of personal support ... Interdependency and mutual support provide a more realistic account of the relationships which normally exist between and across the generations involving child, sibling, parent, grandparent and, indeed, great grandparent. (Deven et al., 1998: 95)

The care as burden debate, as Morris (1993) has made clear on behalf of young disabled men and women, can be very demeaning in some of its manifestations for those who have disabilities. We have yet to hear or

theorise the voices of older men and women on the experience of being cared for.

### **3 Agency, Resistance, Power and Knowledge**

The discussion of discourses and deconstruction has already touched on theoretical aspects of power. Following Foucault (1980), I would argue that relevant theory has to be able to see power as dispersed and operating in a wide range of ways - not simply as a matter of patriarchal relations or the power of the state. Power is also knowledge, though the knowledge produced by oppressed groups is usually suppressed as worthless or subversive. One purpose of emancipatory research is to make this knowledge more visible.

The second point about this view of power is that the exercise of power generates or implies resistance. In other words, oppressed groups or individuals resist the imposition of disadvantage, or of invisibility, or the definitions of knowledge and theory that are imposed on them by others. This resistance may be group-based or individual, and will vary as the processes of dominance vary. For example, older men and women know that they are not all alike and frequently they know that they do not want to band together, but the young may still see them as relatively homogeneous and think of them as united. New interviewers doing qualitative research with older men and women are always amazed by the variety and the vitality they encounter in the field. They did not know what 'the old' know. In the more contested area of pensions, there appears to be a large mismatch in perceptions across generations. Older men and most older women see a pension as their right if they have worked and contributed to taxes or pension funds, but the younger generations are encouraged by the dominant discourse produced in the media and by politicians and academics to see pensioners as dependent on them.

The exercise of power may be contested overtly, as feminist scholars have so successfully done in academia, but resistance is not limited to the overt. There is a continuum which passes through behaviours which overtly oppose the dominant ideology, to almost invisible institutionalised resistance. In these cases there is no question of overtly

contesting existing gendered power relations, but women have access to a range of strategies which undermine male dominance and protect them from the worst impact of some aspects of patriarchal power. This covert or institutionalised resistance is present in most traditional gendered power relationships. It often presents a dilemma for feminist scholars because if they ignore its existence they perpetuate the myth of women as passive victims of patriarchal oppression, but if they uncover the processes of women's resistance they lay women open to reprisals.

Older women's resistance to patriarchy is partially documented, especially in terms of the growing freedom of older women to be themselves (see Myerhoff, 1992; Kertzer and Keith, 1984; Keith, 1994). However, it is possible that much other resistance remains hidden - unable to be perceived because there is no theoretical framework within which to record it. It may be that older men and women are now resisting domination by the young in undocumented ways. Frail elders may resist the categorisation and control implicit in service assessment by refusing services. Normally this is theorised as a deficit in their understanding or as their failure, rather than a service failure. Very large areas of later life remain uninvestigated, arguably because they cannot be seen within the framework of existing theory.<sup>1</sup> For example Myerhoff (1992) recorded the attention-seeking (not her term but a reflection of what she describes) behaviour of older Jewish day centre members and their wish to be named in the publications, play and film of her research about them. She theorised their actions as one aspect of a strategy to resist marginalisation. Others might have seen it simply as the childishness expected from the dependent. There is no doubt that in terms of life styles, older women in prosperous Western countries are resisting a wide range of popular stereotypes of age-appropriate behaviour - from leading their own lives instead of caring for grandchildren (Heycox, 1997) to travelling the world.

---

1 For example, Howarth (1993) shows how older women cook for older men in exchange for handyman style work about their houses. Such an idea of the maintenance of independence through reciprocal help among the over 75s does not figure in the literature related to the needs of older people or in general social gerontology. Food, in any case, has a low profile in sociology despite its key importance. It is apparently mainly a women's area.

In feminist terms, older women are now 'doing ageing' in large numbers rather than theorising it, and in the process they are contesting existing theory and dominant discourses on age and gender. Their success is so great that, for example, the University of the Third Age has almost made it age-appropriate behaviour to take up new interests and learn new things in later life, in contrast to the popular wisdom that 'You can't teach an old dog new tricks'. In the West, where older men and women are more likely to be free from the severest need, and are present in greater numbers, there is more freedom of action. Proper, or age-appropriate, behaviour is not as clearly prescribed as it is in other sections of the life course and in functionalist terms society has less to lose if the marginalised old do their own thing, than it does when young unemployed men behave 'deviantly'. Myerhoff noted that old age:

... often creates anomie and isolation, at the same time it offers calculating resourceful elders in many settings occasions in which they may innovate and exploit the rolelessness, a set of fruitful possibilities. Often freed from heavy social obligations and prohibitions for the first time, the elderly may become deft manipulators and entrepreneurs, justifying stereotypes concerning their unconventionality, originality and wisdom. (Myerhoff, 1992: 308)

This statement is gender-free but clearly applies to older women.

It also seems very likely that when older men and women resist the exercise of power over them they use different processes and forms of resistance from those which are most common at younger ages. Older men and women often, though not always, take a longer view of society than the young, whose experience does not stretch back so far. One result is the stereotypical conservative elder who thinks things are not what they used to be. Another is the growing wisdom that leads to more tolerance and more willingness to negotiate and compromise - forms of resistance that are more subtle but still real.

## 4 Identities and Boundaries

The apparent simplicities of class, ethnicity or even sex, only offer partial identities to most men and women. It follows that it is no longer adequate for most purposes of research and policy making to categorise individuals or groups by one or two attributes. This is not to say that class, for example, is no longer relevant, but to point out that most people are members of more than one group and that individual and group identities change over time and in different situations. To take one example, a 60 year old pensioner may join a pensioner's campaign group, or she may refuse to on the grounds that she is not old and only old people belong to pensioner's groups (very likely in UK). Instead, she may become a volunteer at a day centre 'helping old people'. If she belongs to a minority rather than the dominant ethnic group, she may also decide to visit her roots and see how far she wishes to identify with the society she moved away from. In these aspects of her life she is making her own choices about identity and its boundaries but in other spheres the choices are made for her. Family or friends may regard her as young or old, largely it seems, depending on her appearance and vitality and their own age or family position. To her grandchildren she will surely be 'quite old'. And whatever she and her friends think, the state will have identified her as a pensioner. In the UK in 1998, she will either draw her pension or be required to write in saying she is deferring it. The example shows how one person may have multiple identities and how the boundaries of an identity can shift. These boundaries can become clearer or more fuzzy and can be accepted or contested.

Identities can be enhanced and boundaries strengthened by the identification of non-group members as 'the other' (Brah, 1996). The stereotypical weak and illogical woman is set up as 'the other' of the strong and rational man. In the same way, the 'old' are 'the other' for the more powerful midlife and young. A characteristic of those seen as 'the other' is that they seem to be homogeneous - all irrational at certain times of the month, or all decrepit - while in-group members can still be perceived as more varied. Research on 'the other' (as ageing research almost invariably is), can easily suffer from this lack of attention to multiple identities and from a failure to take account of difference and diversity.

For many women and members of minorities, the experience of being seen as 'the other' has been empowering and has led to a growth in strength and confidence. But later life in Western cultures poses particular problems of identity. In societies where ageism is endemic it is hard to look forward to old age: to a devalued position, characterised in dominant discourse by incompetence and dependency. Indeed, activity theories of ageing imply that 'successful ageing' depends on keeping active and behaving as much like a middle-aged person as possible - in fact in denying the onset of 'old age'. Even without activity theory, empirical work shows that many older people do not see themselves as old. Matthews (1979), for example, stressed the importance of ageing in place so that a younger self could still be seen as a main identity. These older people may rationally be aware that they have reached old age and that their friends are old, but that does not mean that they feel old, or want to see themselves as 'old'. They are likely to be very unsympathetic to any dominant discourse that sees them as both old and 'other', and hence to any attempts to categorise or politicise them based on age alone. They may also see assessment and service provision as the badges of relegation to a devalued category.

There are always exceptions to such generalisations and at individual level there are those who expect to be cared for once they reach a certain life stage or age and may welcome a degree of dependency. They are a small minority in Western societies but may be much more important in others. (See, for example, the sad case histories of older Ghanaian men who expected to be respected and supported in their old age, in Nana Apt, 1996). On a political level, the examples of those who are exceptional in their wish to stand up and be identified as old and proud of it include the oft-quoted cases of the Grey Panthers and other activist pensioner groups (Jacobs, 1980). Such groups have made a breakthrough in age consciousness and can offer a new identity to older people, but so far only a minority have come forward to name themselves as old in Western countries.

### **Diversity and Difference**

When looking from the outside at 'the other' it is very easy, as noted above, to slip into the practice of seeing the other as homogeneous, as for



example 'women' or 'older women'. This ignores class differences and culture, religion and ethnicity, marital status and size of family to take just a few attributes that can affect the life chances and identities of individual women or of groups of women. As Brah (1997) has pointed out, binary differences such as black/white or young/old are easily accommodated in popular discourses identifying 'the other' but they conceal a much more varied range of processes and power relations.

In this paper, the term diversity is used to contest the uniformity implied by broad classifications. There is diversity within groups and diversities change over time. These diversities may or may not be structured into differences - aspects of disadvantage or advantage which accompany diversity (though some would argue that given the diffuse nature of power it is unwise to expect any diversity to be free of structured relationships which relate to differences in power). The case of middle- and working-class women illustrates how difference within a disadvantaged group affects the outcomes of equal opportunities policies. The same policies have benefited middle-class women very much more than working-class women. In community care, Ahmad and Atkin (1996) have shown how service provision which ignores difference leads to the reinforcement of existing structures of disempowerment. Their discussion is focused on ethnic difference but it could be applied to any other differences that are currently ignored in the provision of services for older men and women. For example, financing voluntary groups (whether ethnic minority or drawing on some other constituency) to provide services may alter or reinforce power relations within a community group. It can perpetuate the inequality of women or reinforce the marginalisation of older people. Local funders may wish to maintain the status quo in minority groups but they must expect their decisions to be contested.

The imposed uniformity noted above by Rubinstein, (1990: 116) also assumes that elders of whatever age are the same, once the boundary to old age has been crossed. At an individual level this is obviously untrue, but even taking average characteristics, men or women of 65 will differ from those aged 85. There are also cohort or generation effects which mean that age differences established at one point in time may not hold 20 years later when a different generation has reached the relevant age.

Differences between cohorts are most likely to be noticed in demography where, for example, it is well understood that differences in marriage and birth rates for women of all classes in the first half of the twentieth century feed through to changes over time in the percentage of older women (and men) who are childless at age 80. Such variations are frequently ignored in research based on mixed age samples of 'older people' and in literature reviews where findings from research of 20 or more years ago may be treated as if they were still current, (which they may be but this cannot be assumed).

### **Racism**

Black feminist scholars (Brah, 1996; Bhavnani and Phoenix, 1994) have pointed out that whiteness is an ethnicity and an identity in the same way as any other, and that difference based on ethnicity (in power relations and in interests) exists within the women's movement. Such an approach is perhaps more radical in Europe than in Australia where consciousness of whiteness has deep roots (Burnley, Encel and McCall, 1985). Black scholars have also highlighted the ways that racism interacts with other structures of difference, rather than being a uniform source of disadvantage. Little has been heard of racism in connection with older men and women apart from the constant (racist) discourse that the ethnic minority family cares for its own. The implication that racialised and disadvantaged women make automatic, and good, carers is depressing, both for what it says about dominant stereotypes and in its implications for lack of support by social services.

Racism is also present in the way that dominant Western ageing theory ignores cross-cultural aspects of the subject. As mentioned under resistance above, the world norm has traditionally been that women become more powerful as they age. In some societies this power was overt but in others it was better defined as 'influence'. It may have been power which could affect the whole community or a more limited power over other women only. In some (few) societies it appears that women automatically became more powerful as they aged. More often, society provided a framework within which most older women could achieve considerable power, even though some lacked the attributes and the luck needed to achieve it. The Western pattern where elders of both sexes are

looked down on and women are condemned to widespread poverty and devaluation was the exception rather than the rule (Chaney, 1989; Keith, 1994). This does not mean that the condition of older women (or even older men) was automatically good, or that they were well cared for by loving families in some golden age. However, it is clear that the social structures within which ageing took place have been more supportive in many societies than the Western ideological norm.

Now that so few countries are mono-cultural, it is essential to adopt a cross-cultural approach to ageing theory. Migration and displacement of refugees has meant that difference and diversity are no longer confined to class or regions within indigenous groups, but take in a wider range of cultural and ethnic variations. Refusal to acknowledge these changes produces biased knowledge. It also helps to suppress the elements of diversity within the dominant culture that can be easier to identify once they have been made visible by other cultures - always providing the view of 'the other' does not prevent such transfers of knowledge.

In the wider policy arena the racist ability to ignore the foreign 'other' in terms of the place of older men and women in other cultures extends in two related directions. First, economic restructuring packages, imposed on countries in Africa, Latin America and east Asia by the international rescue agencies (IMF and World Bank) and creditor nations, pay no attention to the impact of their policies on elders (Paul and Paul, 1995; Hendricks, 1995). Safety netting for disadvantaged groups, including the elderly, was barely mentioned until the 1990s when the plight of white poverty-stricken male victims of structural adjustment in Eastern Europe became visible. Safety netting (Umali-Deininger and Maguire, 1995) now has a place in World Bank policies in Europe but does not appear to have been a consideration in recent Asian crises packages. At a more global level we also have to ask whether the World Bank's (1994) push for privately funded pensions world wide was motivated by concern for future economic development and the well-being of older people, or as a way of transferring funds from southern countries with poorly developed stock markets to northern countries, particularly to the US where personal saving is traditionally low. Older men and women are the first victims of these policies but they have little political power (being still

well under ten per cent of the electorate in most developing democracies) and it appears to be possible to ignore them.

## **The Body**

Yuval Davis (1997) has shown how powerfully the female body is used to delimit the nation and as a way of defiling the 'other' (rape in war). In younger age groups also the body is primarily seen as a site of patriarchal control via sexuality and the medicalisation of reproduction. However, in later life sexuality is (wrongly) assumed to be defunct and reproduction is ignored. The reproduction of grandchildren is a matter of gender (care and cultural transmission) rather than sex (birth). On the other hand, control and medicalisation of the older body (mainly but not entirely women's bodies) is an uncomfortable fact of life for many older men and women. There is also the fact that the body becomes a more powerful limiting force as it loses strength. The commercialisation of the older body continues with polypharmacy. Multiple prescriptions for chronic conditions ensure that many older men and women become resources for drug companies in later life. They are prescribed, and consume, drugs whose marketability depends not on making a cure but on maintaining chronic illnesses, as well as drugs which are intended to limit the harmful effects of other drugs but which often end up creating their own adverse effects. Treatment frequently fails to take the limitations of the older body into account and medically generated sickness is widespread. Add in the common perception that old age is an incurable disease not worth alleviating, and it is clear that a theoretical framework which started from the older body would produce a very different set of discourses on old age. It would most probably be so different from the dominant discourse that it would be discounted as emotional and extreme.

In terms of health and social care services for older men and women, we can theorise the older body as a devalued body. It may be seen as a battle field with contested boundaries which are nearly all negative. In literal terms the older body is despised by many. One husband described how a specialist hospital doctor had looked at his wife 'as if it's a bit of meat on a slab' (quoted in Wilson, 1993b). In more symbolic terms each service marks out its area so that bits of the body 'belong' to different services: devalued bits to devalued branches of welfare; feet to chiropody; teeth (if

any) to dentists; health problems that cannot be cured to social care; the sick brain to psychogeriatrics; and so on. On this interpretation, older bodies (men and women) exist only to validate the status relations of the services who provide for them. In contrast, less decayed older bodies, as Featherstone and Wernick (1995) and Featherstone, Hepworth and Turner (1991) have suggested, are most positively viewed as a site which symbolically validates participation in the global consumer society. The self-directed life project (Giddens, 1991) implies the consumption of products that stave off old age - like cosmetics, health care and exercise - and others that indicate that the body is still 'young' - foreign or adventurous holidays and active membership of clubs and societies.

### **Life Course**

On the positive side, the dominant discourse in social gerontology has reached a point of consensus on the need to theorise ageing in terms of the life course (see Riley, 1996, and other articles in *Gerontologist*, 36(2), 1996). In other words, older men and women cannot be theorised simply as 'old' whatever that may mean, but must be seen as ageing, and having aged since birth. This is a more ethical stance than one that sees elders as adequately defined simply by age, without reference to their pasts or futures. However, it is still based on individual life courses and does not indicate how older men and women can be theorised in relation to society. The life-course approach is made more relevant to the lives of older men and women by seeing it as a matter of intersecting relationships with different structures - family, class, age, gender, ethnicity/racialisation - but more work is needed to site these differences in policy terms, for example, to highlight and understand the workings of citizenship deficits among older men and women.

### **Emotions**

Although, or because, we shall all (or nearly all) cross the boundary to old age (wherever it may be sited) and we all (or nearly all) view old age with fear or even loathing, we remain unwilling to see our emotions as data. It is clear that being old is an emotional issue: assume someone is older than they are (if they are past 40) and see the reaction. However, there has been little work directly analysing the role that emotion plays in

the way old age (or later life) is constructed, defined and measured. At a practical level, the process of interviewing disadvantaged elders can be very depressing. The build up of emotional pain can be so great that interviewers are unable to carry on and may fake data or simply stop work. Some form of emotional support is always advisable when interviewing very old people or those who are near death. Otherwise the qualitative researcher is liable to switch off in self-protection and will omit data which cause pain, but which are part of the life of those being interviewed. They may also project their own pain back onto the research participants and so exaggerate the negative side of the research on the lives of elders. This happens when research on disadvantaged groups results in a wholly negative picture, as with much literature on the double or triple jeopardies of being old and female and from an ethnic minority. Research based on negative theory finds it difficult to cope with positive aspects of the life of women or older people.

## **5 Rights and Capabilities**

Emancipatory research, or politicisation for emancipatory action, needs a theoretical framework which can take account of difference and diversity, and the shifts in identity which may be involved. The simplicities of theory based on experience of oppression (as with old-fashioned class consciousness) have given way to a more complex process of building coalitions around different issues. This does not mean that similarities between men and women have no place. These similarities have been particularly stressed by liberal feminists who wanted to use existing state structures to gain equal rights for men and women. Similarities are important in arguing for certain universal human rights and when using arguments based on the intrinsic worth of an individual, but few feminists would now rely only on a universalist approach with no distinction between men and women. The policy process has shown that structural factors which differentiate the position of men and women in society mean that measures which are the same for men and women act in different ways and have different gender outcomes. Outcomes will also differ within gender, by class or culture. It follows that universalist policies can only advance equality to a certain extent. Structural change in the manifestations of patriarchy/ageism and positive discrimination are needed as well.

Although feminists have largely abandoned arguments based on similarities between men and women, some gerontologists and campaigners for better treatment for older people argue that the old are no different from other adults and that it is ageist to categorise older people as different from younger on grounds of age. A related argument is that older men and women who are frail or suffering from a disability should be treated first and foremost as disabled or frail rather than as old. There is no doubt that such discourses are useful when the aim is equal rights or citizenship for older men and women. Also, if 'the old' are not to be treated as 'the other', alien and, by implication, lower forms of life to those in midlife or younger, it becomes important to blur the boundary between midlife and old age and to emphasise continuities over the life course. But there are other times when analyses of difference are essential. In this as in other aspects of policy-related research, it is helpful to have a clear understanding of when to universalise and when to stress difference, and why these research stances have been chosen.

As individuals, older men and women appear to suffer from very large deficits in citizenship, many of which have yet to be researched. However, in contrast to their individual positions, older people as a (usually fictive) collective group have very much more power and this power is growing. The very high probability that older people are perceived as 'the other' by politicians and policy makers, means that they tend to be seen as a block and their voting numbers (moving towards 30 per cent of the electorate in many European countries and much higher in individual constituencies) give them more political power than their disunity and diversity warrants. (Consider the 1998 Australian budget, full of sweeteners for old age.) There is also a growing number of cases where pensioners have come together on single issue campaigns and their votes have made a difference. Older people in the USA are an exception: they are much better organised and apparently more willing to identify as a group and thus have more power, but even they do not vote as a bloc.

It is possible that the gap between universal rights and the need to take account of diversity and difference may be filled by the capabilities approach put forward by Sen (1993) and Nussbaum (1995). Their concept of capabilities combines a universalist analysis of the moral imperative of governments to enable all people to 'flourish', with more

individualised attention to the actual set of capabilities men and women need to do so. For example, a disabled woman of 80 is unlikely to be able to flourish with the same package of capabilities as an able-bodied 65-year-old man. Questions about the set of capabilities that *older* men and women will need to flourish have not been addressed by Sen or Nussbaum but provide a way forward for the more philosophical aspects of emancipatory theory for ageing.

## 6 Conclusion

In practical terms, the lack of relevant theory or the weakness of socially approved role models for later life means that in the West older men and women are 'doing ageing' faster than researchers and policy makers can theorise what is happening. They/we are constructing new boundaries, new discourses, new lifestyles and new ways of relating to society, but rarely in militant or conventionally political ways. Gender theory has been produced differently and in a much more militant manner.

Feminist theory has much to contribute to research on later life. When applied to life course theory (see articles in *Gerontologist*, 36(2) 1996), it allows us to theorise the life course of either individuals or cohorts as a continuous interaction with changing structures of age, gender, family, ethnicity/culture and social class. Each of these structures has changing personal, social, historical and spatial forms which help to structure power relations and life chances as well as personal identities (Lorenz-Meyer, 1997). In terms of agency, these structures provide a framework within which older men and women construct their lives and make conscious or unconscious choices that influence and are influenced by the structures concerned. In other words, older men and women are not passive victims of social structures. They resist disadvantage and oppression and their resistance is linked to the passage of time. In later life constraints on action may be relaxed (as noted above by Myerhoff, 1992) and greater possibilities for resisting dominant ideologies of appropriate behaviour may open up. Long practice in negotiating patriarchy may also come into its own in later life, leading to new possibilities for older women. Alternatively, overt resistance may be diffused, either by endurance or acceptance which can be seen as forms of resistance themselves, and even by despair which is more negative.



I have argued above for a more eclectic approach to theory when researching older people. I have also assumed that the aim of social policy research is emancipatory and designed to help disadvantaged groups, even though such a traditional approach is under threat from market-led policies. An ageing world is a new world and it is unlikely that old theories and methods of research will be adequate to cope with new developments and new realities. At present we cannot know how much change will be needed or in what directions. I argue, therefore, that we should be as open as possible and ready to consider developments in other branches of social science, at the same time as trying to increase the effective participation of older people from all walks of life in theory building and research. As things stand we have a long way to go.

## References

- Ahmad. W.I.U. and K. Atkin, eds (1996), *Race and Community Care*, Open University Press, Buckingham.
- Arber S. and J. Ginn (1991), *Gender and Later Life*, Sage, London.
- Arber, S. and J. Ginn, eds (1995), *Connecting Gender and Ageing*, Open University Press, Buckingham.
- Bhavnani, K. and A. Phoenix, eds (1994), *Shifting Identities Shifting Racisms*, Sage, London.
- Brah, A. (1997), *Cartography of Diaspora: Contesting Identities*, Routledge, London.
- Burnley, I.H., S. Encel and G. McCall, eds (1985), *Immigration and Ethnicity in the 1980s*, Longman Cheshire, Melbourne.
- Chaney, E.M. (1989), The Empowerment of Old Women: a Cross-cultural View, paper presented at the Conference Coping with Social Change, Acapulco, Mexico.
- Deven, F., S. Inglis, P. Moss and P. Petrie (1998), *State of the Art Review on the Reconciliation of Work and Family Life for Men and Women and the Quality of Care Services*, Department for Education and Research Report RR44, Department for Education and Employment, London.
- Disney, R. (1996), *Can We Afford to Grow Older*, MIT Press, Cambridge.
- Estes, C. (1979), *The Aging Enterprise*, Jossey Bass, San Francisco.

- Featherstone, M., M. Hepworth and B.S. Turner, eds (1991), *The Body: Social Process and Cultural Theory*, Sage, London.
- Featherstone, M. and A. Wernick, eds (1995), *Images of Ageing: Cultural Representations of Later Life*, Routledge, London.
- Finch, J. and D. Groves (1983), *A Labour of Love: Women, Work, and Caring*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London.
- Foucault, M. (1980), *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977*, edited by Colin Gordon, Harvester Press, Brighton.
- Gibson, D. (1996) 'Broken down by age and gender: "the problem of old women" redefined', *Gender and Society*, 10(4), 433-48.
- Gibson, D. (1998), *Aged Care Old Policies, New Problems*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- Giddens, A. (1991), *Modernity and Self-identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age*, Polity, Cambridge.
- Hendricks, J. (1995), 'Older women in social and economic development', *Ageing International*, 22(2), 55-8.
- Heycox, K. (1997), 'Older women: issues and gender', in A. Borowshki, S. Encel and E. Ozanne, *Ageing and Social Policy in Australia*, Cambridge University Press, Melbourne, 94-118.
- Howarth, G. (1993), 'Food consumption, social roles and personal identity', in S. Arber and M. Evandrou, eds, *Ageing, Independence and the Life Course*, London, Sage, 65-77.
- Jacobs, R.H. (1980), 'Portrait of a phenomenon: the Grey Panthers: do they have a long-run future?', in E.W. Markson and G.R. Batra, *Public Policies for Aging Populations*, Lexington Books, Lexington, Mass, 93-103.
- Keith, J. (1994), *Aging Experience: Diversity and Commonality Across Cultures*, Sage, Thousand Oaks.
- Kertzer, D.I. and J. Keith, eds (1984), *Age and Anthropological Theory*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, N.Y.
- Lorenz-Meyer, D. (1997), *Inter-generational Solidarity, Social Institutions and Self-help Strategies in 'Old' Age. A Comparison Between Migrants from Turkey and Cyprus*, TMR Fellowship Report. London School of Economics, London.
- Matthews, S.H. (1979), *The Social World of Old Women*, Sage, Beverley Hills.

- Morris, J. (1993), *Independent Lives?: Community Care and Disabled People*, Macmillan, Basingstoke.
- Myerhoff, B. (1992), *Remembered Lives*, University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor.
- Nana Apt,A. (1996), *Coping with Old Age in a Changing Africa: Social Change and the Elderly Ghanaian*, Avebury, Brookfield, VT.
- Nussbaum, M. (1995), 'Human capabilities, female human beings', in M. Nussbaum and J. Glover, eds, *Women, Culture and Development*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 61-104.
- Paul, S.S. and J.A. Paul (1995), 'World Bank, pensions, and income (in)security in the global South', *International Journal of Health Services*, 25(4), 697-725.
- Phillipson, C. (1982), *Capitalism and the Construction of Old Age*, Macmillan, London.
- Pritchard, J. (1992), *The Abuse of Elderly People: A Handbook for Professionals*, Jessica Kingsley Publishers, London.
- Riley, M.W. (1996), 'Discussion: what does it all mean?', *Gerontologist*, 36(2), 256-8.
- Rubinstein, R.L., ed. (1990), *Anthropology and Aging*, Kluwer Academic Publishers, Dordrecht.
- Sen, A. (1993), 'Capability and well-being', in M.C. Nussbaum. and A. Sen, eds, *The Quality of Life*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 30-53.
- Townsend, P. (1981), 'The structured dependency of the elderly: the creation of social policy in the twentieth century', *Ageing and Society*, 1(1), 5-28.
- Townsend, P. (1986), 'Ageism and social policy', in C. Phillipson and A. Walker, eds, *Ageing and Social Policy*, Gower, Aldershot, 15-44.
- Twigg, J. and K. Atkin (1994), *Carers Perceived: Policy and Practice in Informal Care*, Open University Press, Buckingham.
- Umali-Deininger, D. and C. Maguire, eds (1995), *Agriculture in Liberalizing Economies: Changing Roles for Governments: Proceedings of the Fourteenth Agricultural Symposium, 1994*, World Bank, Washington, DC.
- Walker, A. (1980), 'The social creation of poverty and dependency in old age', *Journal of Social Policy*, 9(1), 45-75.
- Walker, A. (1981), 'Towards a political economy of old age', *Ageing and Society*, 1(1), 73-94.

- Walker, A. (1983), 'Social policy and elderly people in Great Britain: the construction of dependent social and economic status in old age', in A.M. Guillemand, ed., *Old Age and the Welfare State*, Sage, Beverly Hills, 143-67.
- Whittaker, T. (1995), 'Gender and elder abuse', in S. Arber and J. Ginn, eds, *Connecting Gender and Ageing*, Open University Press, Buckingham, 144-57.
- Wilson, G. (1993a), 'Abuse of elderly men and women among clients of a community psychogeriatric service', *British Journal of Social Work*, 42, 681-700.
- Wilson, G. (1993b), 'Users and providers: perspectives on community care services', *Journal of Social Policy*, 22(4), 507-26.
- Wilson, G. (1997), 'Demography, economics and the study of old age: 'bad science' and ageist knowledge', *Health Care and Illness in Later Life*, 2(4), 260-70.
- Yuval Davis, N. (1997), *Gender and Nation*, Sage, London.
- World Bank (1994), *Averting the Old Age Crisis*, World Bank, Washington, DC.

## SOCIAL POLICY RESEARCH CENTRE DISCUSSION PAPERS

◆ No longer available.

◇ Published in Journal (list follows)

|        |  |  |                |
|--------|--|--|----------------|
| 1. ◆◇  | The Labour Market Position of Aboriginal People in Non-Metropolitan New South Wales                          | Russell Ross                                     | August 1988    |
| 2. ◆   | Welfare Fraud, Work Incentives and Income Support for the Unemployed   | Bruce Bradbury                                   | August 1988    |
| 3. ◆◇  | Taxation and Social Security: An Overview  | Peter Whiteford                                  | August 1988    |
| 4. ◆◇  | Income Inequality in Australia in an International Comparative Perspective                                   | Peter Saunders & Garry Hobbes                    | August 1988    |
| 5. ◆◇  | Family Size Equivalence Scales and Survey Evaluations of Income and Well-Being                               | Bruce Bradbury                                   | December 1988  |
| 6. ◆◇  | Income Testing the Tax Threshold   | Peter Whiteford                                  | December 1988  |
| 7. ◆   | Workers' Compensation and Social Security Expenditure in Australia: Anti-Social Aspects of the 'Social' Wage | Don Stewart & Jennifer Doyle                     | December 1988  |
| 8. ◆   | Teenagers in the Labour Market: 1983-1988  | Russell Ross                                     | December 1988  |
| 9. ◆   | A Legacy of Choice: Economic Thought and Social Policy in Australia, the Early Post-War Years                | Paul Smyth                                       | May 1989       |
| 10. ◆◇ | The 'Family Package' and the Cost of Children  | Bruce Bradbury                                   | May 1989       |
| 11. ◆  | Towards an Understanding of Commonwealth Social Expenditure Trends   | Peter Saunders                                   | May 1989       |
| 12. ◆◇ | A Comparative Study of Home and Hospital Births: Scientific and Normative Variables and their Effects        | Cathy Boland                                     | July 1989      |
| 13. ◆  | Adult Goods and the Cost of Children in Australia  | Bruce Bradbury                                   | July 1989      |
| 14. ◆◇ | Some Australian Evidence on the Consensual Approach to Poverty Measurement                                   | Peter Saunders & Bruce Bradbury                  | July 1989      |
| 15. ◇  | Income Inequality in Australia and New Zealand: International Comparisons and Recent Trends                  | Peter Saunders, Garry Hobbes & Helen Stott       | September 1989 |
| 16. ◆◇ | Trends in the Disposable Incomes of Australian Families, 1982-83 to 1989-90                                  | Bruce Bradbury, Jennifer Doyle & Peter Whiteford | January 1990   |
| 17. ◇  | Selectivity and Targeting in Income Support: The Australian Experience                                       | Peter Saunders                                   | February 1990  |

|       |  |                                  |                |
|-------|--|----------------------------------|----------------|
| 18.◆◇ | How Reliable are Estimates of Poverty in Australia? Some Sensitivity Tests for the Period 1981-82 to 1985-86 | Bruce Bradbury & Peter Saunders  | February 1990  |
| 19.◆◇ | The Labour Supply Behaviour of Single Mothers and Married Mothers in Australia                               | Russell Ross & Peter Saunders    | July 1990      |
| 20.◆◇ | Income Poverty Among Aboriginal Families with Children: Estimates from the 1986 Census                       | Russell Ross & Peter Whiteford   | July 1990      |
| 21.◇  | Compensating Low Income Groups for Indirect Tax Reforms  | Peter Saunders & Peter Whiteford | August 1990    |
| 22.◆◇ | Reflections on the Review of the Home and Community Care Program   | Peter Saunders                   | August 1990    |
| 23.◆◇ | Sole Parent Families in Australia  | Peter Saunders & George Matheson | September 1990 |
| 24.◇  | Unemployment, Participation and Family Incomes in the 1980s  | Bruce Bradbury                   | September 1990 |
| 25.◆◇ | Employment Growth and Poverty: An Analysis of Australian Experience, 1983-1990                               | Peter Saunders                   | September 1990 |
| 26.◆  | Gender, Social Policy Regimes and the Welfare State  | Sheila Shaver                    | November 1990  |
| 27.   | A Probit Analysis of the Factors Influencing Labour Market Success of Aborigines in New South Wales          | Russell Ross                     | November 1990  |
| 28.◆◇ | Efficiency and Effectiveness in Social Policies: An International Perspective                                | Peter Saunders                   | December 1990  |
| 29.   | Take-up of Family Income Supplement in 1986 - A Research Note  | Peter Whiteford & Jennifer Doyle | February 1991  |
| 30.◇  | An Ever-Rising Tide? Poverty in Australia in the Eighties:   | Peter Saunders & George Matheson | May 1991       |
| 31.◇  | Are Immigrants Over-Represented in the Australian Social Security System?                                    | Peter Whiteford                  | March 1992     |
| 32.   | Measuring the Cost of Children   | Bruce Bradbury                   | May 1992       |
| 33.◇  | The Impact of Family Assistance Changes on Patterns of Unemployment Benefit Receipt                          | Bruce Bradbury                   | August 1992    |
| 34.◇  | Recent Trends in the Size and Growth of Government in OECD Countries   | Peter Saunders                   | September 1992 |
| 35.◇  | Noncash Income, Living Standards, Inequality and Poverty: Evidence from the Luxembourg Income Study          | Peter Saunders et al             | November 1992  |
| 36.◆◇ | The Mixed Economy of Support for the Aged In Australia: Lesson for Privatisation                             | Peter Saunders & Michael Fine    | November 1992  |

|       |  |  |                |
|-------|--|--|----------------|
| 37.   | The Welfare Interpretation of Family Size Equivalence Scales   | Bruce Bradbury                                   | November 1992  |
| 38.◇  | Body Rights, Social Rights and the Liberal Welfare State   | Sheila Shaver                                    | December 1992  |
| 39.◇  | Unemployment and Income Support: Challenges for the Years Ahead  | Bruce Bradbury                                   | May 1993       |
| 40.◇  | Married Women's Earnings and Family Income Inequality in the Eighties  | Peter Saunders                                   | May 1993       |
| 41.   | Women and the Australian Social Security System: From Difference Towards Equality                                  | Sheila Shaver                                    | June 1993      |
| 42.   | Male Wage Inequality Before and After Tax: A Six Country Comparison  | Bruce Bradbury                                   | June 1993      |
| 43.◆  | The Fragmented Structure of Community Support Services: A Community Case Study                                     | Michael Fine                                     | June 1993      |
| 44.◆◇ | The Recognition of Wifely Labour by Welfare States   | Sheila Shaver & Jonathan Bradshaw                | August 1993    |
| 45.   | Postmodernism and Social Policy: A Great Leap Backwards?   | Peter Taylor-Gooby                               | September 1993 |
| 46.◇  | Making Ends Meet in Australia and Sweden: A Comparative Analysis of the Consensual Approach to Poverty Measurement | Peter Saunders, Björn Halleröd & George Matheson | October 1993   |
| 47.◆  | Economic Adjustment and Distributional Change: Income Inequality and Poverty in Australia in the Eighties          | Peter Saunders                                   | November 1993  |
| 48.◆◇ | Poverty and Inequality: Social Security in Australia in the 1990s  | Peter Saunders                                   | May 1994       |
| 49.◇  | Rising on the Tasman Tide: Income Inequality in Australia and New Zealand in the 1980s                             | Peter Saunders                                   | June 1994      |
| 50.   | A New Approach to the Direct Measurement of Consensual Poverty   | Björn Halleröd                                   | October 1994   |
| 51.   | The Distribution of Welfare: Inequality, Earnings Capacity and Household Production in a Comparative Perspective   | Peter Saunders Inge O'Connor & Timothy Smeeding  | November 1994  |
| 52.◇  | Immigrants and the Distribution of Income: National and International Comparisons                                  | Peter Saunders                                   | November 1994  |
| 53.◇  | The Role, Value and Limitations of Poverty Research  | Peter Saunders                                   | November 1994  |
| 54.◇  | The Use of Replacement Rates In International Comparisons of Benefit Systems                                       | Peter Whiteford                                  | February 1995  |
| 55.◇  | Two Papers on Citizenship and the Basic Income   | Peter Saunders & Sheila Shaver                   | April 1995     |

|       |  |                                   |               |
|-------|--|-----------------------------------|---------------|
| 56.◇  | Improving Work Incentives in a Means-tested System: The 1994 Australian Social Security Reforms                  | Peter Saunders                    | May 1995      |
| 57.◆  | Corporatism in Australia   | Peter Kriesler & Joseph Halevi    | May 1995      |
| 58.   | Universality and Selectivity in Income Support: A Comparative Study in Social Citizenship                        | Sheila Shaver                     | May 1995      |
| 59.   | Household Semi-public Goods and the Estimation of Consumer Equivalence Scales: Some First Steps                  | Bruce Bradbury                    | May 1995      |
| 60.◇  | Wage and Income Inequality in Two Welfare States: Australia and Sweden   | Peter Saunders & Johann Fritzell  | August 1995   |
| 61.◆  | The Changing Mix of Welfare in Health Care and Community Support Services  | Michael Fine                      | August 1995   |
| 62.◇  | Evaluation and Research in Social Policy   | Peter Saunders & Michael Fine     | December 1995 |
| 63.◇  | Unpacking Inequality: Wage Incomes, Disposable Incomes and Living Standards                                      | Peter Saunders                    | December 1995 |
| 64.◆◇ | A Challenge to Work and Welfare: Poverty in Australia in the 1990s   | Peter Saunders                    | December 1995 |
| 65.◆◇ | Social Policy and Personal Life: Changes in State, Family and Community in the Support of Informal Care          | Sheila Shaver & Michael Fine      | December 1995 |
| 66.   | Household Income Sharing, Joint Consumption and the Expenditure Patterns of Australian Couples and Single People | Bruce Bradbury                    | May 1996      |
| 67.   | Explaining Changes in the Social Structure of Employment: The Importance of Geography                            | Boyd Hunter                       | June 1996     |
| 68.   | Liberalism, Gender and Social Policy   | Sheila Shaver                     | July 1996     |
| 69.   | Redistribution by the State in Austria   | Alois Guger                       | October 1996  |
| 70.   | Economic Crisis and Social Policy in Finland in the 1990s  | Hannu Uusitalo                    | October 1996  |
| 71.   | Sole Mothers in Australia: Supporting Mothers to Seek Work   | Marilyn McHugh & Jane Millar      | November 1996 |
| 72.   | ‘All Else Confusion’: What Time Use Surveys Show About Changes in Gender Equity                                  | Michael Bittman & George Matheson | November 1996 |
| 73.   | Are the Low Income Self-employed Poor?   | Bruce Bradbury                    | December 1996 |
| 74.   | Social Policy in East Asia and the Pacific Area in the Twenty-First Century: Challenges and Responses            | Peter Saunders                    | December 1996 |



|     |  |  |               |
|-----|--|--|---------------|
| 75. | Dawning of a New Age? The Extent, Causes and Consequences of Ageing in Australia   | Peter Saunders                                       | December 1996 |
| 76. | Poverty, Choice and Legitimacy   | Peter Saunders                                       | March 1997    |
| 77. | The Restructuring of the Canadian Welfare State: Ideology and Policy   | Maureen Baker  | June 1997     |
| 78. | Developing Policy Planning and Research Capabilities in the Asia Pacific   | Peter Saunders                                       | October 1997  |
| 79. | New Relations of Welfare in the Contracting State: The Marketisation of Services for the Unemployed in Australia               | Tony Eardley   | October 1997  |
| 80. | Coordinating Health, Extended Care and Community Support Services: Issues for Policy Makers and Service Providers in Australia | Michael Fine   | October 1997  |
| 81. | How do the Elderly in Taiwan Fare Cross-Nationally? Evidence from the Luxembourg Income Study Project                          | Peter Saunders & Timothy M. Smeeding                 | April 1998    |
| 82. | An Australian Model for Labour Supply and Welfare Participation in Two-adult Households  | Guyonne Kalb   | June 1998     |
| 83. | The Land of the Lost Long Weekend? Trends in Free Time Among Working Age Australians, 1974-1992                                | Michael Bittman                                      | June 1998     |
| 84. | Defining Poverty and Identifying the Poor: Reflections on the Australian Experience  | Peter Saunders                                       | June 1998     |
| 85. | An Equivalence Scale for Time  | Michael Bittman & Robert E. Goodin                   | July 1998     |
| 86. | The Changing Boundary Between Home and Market: Australian Trends in Outsourcing Domestic Labour                                | Michael Bittman, Gabrielle Meagher & George Matheson | July 1998     |
| 87. | Incomes, Incentives and the Growth of Means Testing in Hungary   | Gerry Redmond  | August 1998   |
| 88. | Economic Insecurity  | Lars Osberg  | October 1998  |
| 89. | Household Budgets and Income Distribution Over the Longer Term: Evidence for Australia   | Peter Saunders                                       | October 1998  |
| 90. | Global Pressures, National Responses: The Australian Welfare State in Context  | Peter Saunders                                       | October 1998  |
| 91. | Working But Poor? Low Pay and Poverty in Australia   | Tony Eardley   | November 1998 |
| 92. | Extension Amidst Retrenchment: Gender and Welfare State Restructuring in Australia and Sweden                                  | Sheila Shaver  | December 1998 |

|      |  |                                  |               |
|------|--|----------------------------------|---------------|
| 93.  | Using Budget Standards to Assess the Well-Being of Families                                    | Peter Saunders                   | December 1998 |
| 94.  | Later Life, Gender and Ethnicity: Changing Theory for Social Policy Research                   | Gail Wilson                      | December 1998 |
| 95.  | Social Participation and Family Welfare: The Money and Time Costs of Leisure                   | Michael Bittman                  | February 1999 |
| 96.  | The Increasing Financial Dependency of Young People on Their Families                          | Judy Schneider                   | February 1999 |
| 97.  | The Rush Hour: The Quality of Leisure Time and Gender Equity                                   | Michael Bittman & Judy Wajcman   | February 1999 |
| 98.  | Women and Retirement Income in Australia: Social Rights, Industrial Rights and Property Rights | Merrin Thompson                  | May 1999      |
| 99.  | The 'Dutch Miracle': Employment Growth in a Retrenched but Still Generous Welfare System       | Uwe Becker                       | May 1999      |
| 100. | Tax Theory and Targeting: A Survey   | Bruce Bradbury                   | May 1999      |
| 101. | Home and Away: Reflections on Long-term Care in the UK and Australia                           | Melanie Henwood                  | June 1999     |
| 102. | Australian Attitudes to Unemployment and Unemployed People                                     | Tony Eardley and George Matheson | June 1999     |
| 103. | The Costs of Children: Budget Standards Estimates and the Child Support Scheme                 | Marilyn McHugh                   | July 1999     |
| 104. | Tax-benefit Policies and Parents' Incentives to Work: The Case of Australia 1980-1997          | Gerry Redmond                    | July 1999     |
| 105. | The Responsibility for Child and Aged Care: Shaping Policies for the Future                    | Michael Fine                     | August 1999   |

## SOCIAL POLICY RESEARCH CENTRE REPRINTS

The following Discussion Papers have been published in journals or books. Where indicated, Reprints of the articles are available from the SPRC at the cost of \$2.00 each. To order reprints, quote the Reprint number and attach a cheque or money order made out to the Social Policy Research Centre. Send orders to:

The Publications Officer  
Social Policy Research Centre  
University of New South Wales  
Sydney NSW 2052  
Australia

| DP No. | Published as  | SPRC<br>Reprint No.<br>(if applicable) |
|--------|---|--|
| 1.     | Russell Ross (1988), 'The Labour Market Position of Aboriginal People in Non-metropolitan New South Wales', <i>Australian Bulletin of Labour</i> , 15(1), December, 29-56.  | 48                                     |
| 3.     | Peter Whiteford (1989), 'Taxation and Social Security: An Overview', <i>Australian Tax Forum</i> , 6(1), 2-39.  | 49                                     |
| 4.     | Peter Saunders and Garry Hobbes (1988), 'Income Inequality in an International Comparative Perspective,' <i>Australian Economic Review</i> , 3rd Quarter, 25-34.  | 47                                     |
| 5.     | Bruce Bradbury (1989), 'Family Size Equivalence Scales and Survey Evaluations of Income and Well-being', <i>Journal of Social Policy</i> , 18(3), July, 383-408.  | 52                                     |
| 6.     | Peter Whiteford (1989), 'Taxation Reform and the Tax Threshold', in John G. Head, ed., <i>Australian Tax Reform in Retrospect and Prospect</i> , papers presented at a conference organised by the Centre of Policy Studies, Monash University, Conferences Series no. 8, Australian Tax Research Foundation, Sydney, 219-47. |  |
| 10.    | Bruce Bradbury (1989), 'The "Family Package" and the Cost of Children', <i>Australian Social Policy</i> , 1(12), Winter, 21-51.   | 59                                     |
| 12.    | Cathy Boland (1989), 'A Comparative Study of Home and Hospital Births: Scientific and Normative Variables and Their Effects', in <i>Celebrating a Revolution in Birth: Proceedings of 10th National Homebirth Conference</i> , Sydney, 19-33.   |  |
| 14.    | Peter Saunders and Bruce Bradbury (1991), 'Some Australian Evidence on the Consensual Approach to Poverty Measurement', <i>Economic Analysis and Policy</i> , 21(1), March, 47-73.  | 62                                     |
| 15.    | Peter Saunders, Helen Stott and Garry Hobbes (1991), 'Income Inequality in Australian and New Zealand: International Comparisons and Recent Trends', <i>Review of Income and Wealth</i> , 37(1), March, 63-79.  | 47                                     |

| DP No. | Published as  | SPRC<br>Reprint No.<br>(if applicable) |
|--------|---|--|
| 16.    | Bruce Bradbury, Jenny Doyle and Peter Whiteford (1993), 'Trends in the Disposable Income and Housing Costs of Australian Families', Greg Mahoney, ed., <i>The Australian Economy under Labor</i> , Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 137-158.  | 71                                     |
| 17.    | Peter Saunders (1991), 'Selectivity and Targeting in Income Support: The Australian Experience', <i>Journal of Social Policy</i> , 20(3), 299-326.  |  |
| 18.    | Bruce Bradbury and Peter Saunders (1990), 'How Reliable are Estimates of Poverty in Australia? Some Sensitivity Tests for the Period 1981-82 to 1985-86', <i>Australian Economic Papers</i> , 29(55), December 154-81.  | 60                                     |
| 19.    | Russell Ross and Peter Saunders (1993), 'The Labour Supply of Sole Mothers and Married Mothers in Australia: Evidence from the 1986 Income Distribution Survey', <i>Australian Economic Papers</i> , Vol. 32, June, 116-133.  |  |
| 20.    | Russell Ross and Peter Whiteford (1992), 'Poverty in 1986: Aboriginal Families with Children', <i>Australian Journal of Social Issues</i> , 27(2), May, 92-111.   | 61                                     |
| 21.    | Peter Saunders and Peter Whiteford (1990), 'Compensating Low Income Groups for Indirect Taxes', <i>Australian Tax Forum</i> , 7(4), 443-64.   |  |
| 22.    | Peter Saunders (1990), 'Reflections on the Review of the HACC Program', in A. Howe, E. Ozanne and C. Selby Smith, eds, <i>Community Care Policy and Practice: New Directions in Australia</i> , Public Sector Management Institute, Monash University, Victoria, 201-12.  | 63                                     |
| 23.    | Peter Saunders and George Matheson (1991), 'Sole Parent Families in Australia', <i>International Social Security Review</i> , 44(3), 51-75.   |  |
| 24.    | Bruce Bradbury (1992), 'Unemployment, Participation and Family Incomes in the 1980s', <i>Economic Record</i> , 68(203), December, 328-42.   | 73                                     |
| 25.    | Peter Saunders (1991), 'Employment Growth and Poverty: An Analysis of the Australian Experience 1982-1990', in Michael Johnson, Peter Kriesler and Anthony D. Owen, eds, <i>Contemporary Issues in Australian Economics</i> , The Economic Society of Australia, Macmillan, Australia, 105-33. (Also excerpts in <i>ACTCOSS News</i> , 5 October, 12-14.) |  |
| 28.    | Peter Saunders (1991), 'Efficiency and Effectiveness in Social Policies: an International Perspective', in T. P. Hardiman and Michael Mulreany, eds, <i>Efficiency and Effectiveness in the Public Domain</i> , Institute of Public Administration, Dublin, 78-117.   |  |

| DP No. | Published as  | SPRC<br>Reprint No.<br>(if applicable) |
|--------|---|--|
| 30.    | Peter Saunders and George Matheson (1991), 'An Ever Rising Tide?: Poverty in Australia in the Eighties', <i>Economic and Labour Relations Review</i> , 2(2), December, 142-71.  | 67                                     |
| 31.    | Peter Whiteford (1991), 'Are immigrants over-represented in the Australian social security system?', <i>Journal of the Australian Population Association</i> , 8(2), November, 93-109.  |  |
| 33.    | Bruce Bradbury (1993), 'Family Assistance and the Incomes of Low Wage Families', <i>Social Security Journal</i> , March, 1-18.<br>and<br>Bruce Bradbury (1993), 'Family Assistance, Replacement Rates and the Unemployment of Married Men', <i>Australian Bulletin of Labour</i> , Vol. 19, No. 2, June, 114-132.   | 70                                     |
| 34.    | Peter Saunders (1993), 'Recent Trends in the Size and Growth of Government in OECD Countries', in Normal Gemmill, ed., <i>The Growth of the Public Sector: Theories and International Evidence</i> , Edward Elgar, Aldershot, 17-33.  |  |
| 35.    | Timothy M. Smeeding, Peter Saunders, John Coder, Stephen Jenkins, Johan Fritzell, Aldi J. M. Hagenaars, Richard Hauser and Michael Wolfson (1993), 'Poverty, Inequality and Family Living Standards Impacts Across Seven Nations: The Effects of Noncash Subsidies for Health, Education and Housing', <i>The Review of Income and Wealth</i> , Series 39, No. 3, September, 229-256. |  |
| 36.    | Peter Saunders and Michael Fine (1992), 'The Mixed Economy of Support for the Aged in Australia: Lessons for Privatisation', <i>Economic and Labour Relations Review</i> , 3(2), December, 18-42.   | 69                                     |
| 38.    | Sheila Shaver (1993), 'Body Rights, Social Rights and the Liberal Welfare State', <i>Critical Social Policy</i> , Issue 39, Winter 1993/94, 66-93.  | 72                                     |
| 39.    | Bruce Bradbury (1993), 'Unemployment, and Income Support: Challenges for the Years Ahead', <i>Economic Papers</i> , Vol. 12, No. 2, June, 14-31.  |  |
| 40.    | Peter Saunders (1993), 'Married Women's Earnings and Family Income Inequality in the Eighties', <i>Australian Bulletin of Labour</i> , Vol. 19, No. 3, 3-22.  |  |
| 44.    | Sheila Shaver and Jonathan Bradshaw (1995), 'The Recognition of Wifely Labour by Welfare States', <i>Social Policy and Administration</i> , Vol. 29, No.1, March, 10-25.  |  |
| 46.    | Peter Saunders, Björn Halleröd and George Matheson (1994), 'Making Ends Meet in Australia and Sweden: A Comparative Analysis Using the Subjective Poverty Line Methodology', <i>Acta Sociologica</i> , Vol. 37, No. 3, 3-22.  |  |

| DP No. | Published as   | SPRC<br>Reprint No.<br>(if applicable) |
|--------|--|--|
| 48.    | Peter Saunders (1993), 'Poverty and Inequality: Social Security in the 1990s', in J. Disney and L. Briggs, eds, <i>Social Security Policy: Issues and Options</i> , papers from the Conference, 'Social Security Policy: The Future', November, AGPS 29-48.  |  |
| 49.    | Peter Saunders (1994), 'Rising on the Tasman Tide: Income Inequality in Australia and New Zealand', <i>Social Policy Journal of New Zealand</i> , Issue 2, July, 97-114.   |  |
| 52.    | Peter Saunders, 'The Immigrant Dimension of Income Inequality' in J. Neville, ed., <i>As the Rich Get Richer: Changes in Income Distribution</i> , Committee for the Economic Development of Australia (CEDA), Sydney, 66-86.  |  |
| 53.    | Peter Saunders (1995), 'In Defence of a Poverty Line', <i>Just Policy</i> , No. 4, September, 9-16.  |  |
| 54.    | Peter Whiteford (1995), 'The Use of Replacement Rates in International Comparisons of Benefit Systems', <i>International Social Security Review</i> , Vol. 48, No.2/95, 3-30.  |  |
| 55.    | Peter Saunders (1995), 'Conditionality and Transition as Issues in the Basic Income Debate', in <i>Income Support in an Open Economy: Basic Income Seminar</i> , Victorian Council of Social Service and the Good Shepherd Youth and Family Services, Melbourne, 51-62.  |  |
| 56.    | Peter Saunders (1995), 'Improving Work Incentives in a Means-Tested Welfare System: The 1994 Australian Social Security Reforms', <i>Fiscal Studies</i> , Vol. 16, No. 2, May, 145-70.   |  |
| 60.    | Johan Fritzell and Peter Saunders (1995), 'Wage and Income Inequality in Two Welfare States: Australia and Sweden', in F. Engelstad, R. Kalleberg, A. Lura and L. MjØset, eds, <i>Comparative Social Research, Volume 15: Institutional Aspects of Work and Wage Determination</i> , JAI Press, Greenwich, CT, 187-229.<br>Also in <i>Comparative Social Research Yearbook</i> |  |
| 62.    | Peter Saunders and Michael Fine (1997), 'Evaluation and Research in Social Policy', <i>Australian Journal of Social Research</i> , Vol. 3, No. 1, January, 75-94.  |  |
| 63.    | Peter Saunders (1996), 'Unpacking Inequality: Wage Incomes, Disposable Incomes and Living Standards', in <i>The Industry Commission Conference on Equity, Efficiency and Welfare, Conference Proceedings</i> , AGPS, Canberra, 225-55.   |  |
| 64.    | Peter Saunders (1996), 'Poverty in the 1990s: A Challenge to Work and Welfare', in P. Sheehan, B. Grewal and M. Kumnick, eds, <i>Dialogues in Australia's Future: In Honour of the Late Professor Ronald Henderson</i> , Centre for Strategic Economic Studies, Victoria University of Technology, Melbourne, 325-50.  |  |

DP No.      Published as

SPRC  
Reprint No.  
(if applicable)

65.      Sheila Shaver and Michael Fine (1996), 'Social Policy and Personal Life: Changes in State, Family and Community in the Support of Informal Care' in Aged and Community Care Division and Office of Disability, Department of Human Services and Health, *Towards a National Agenda for Carers, Workshop Papers, No. 22*, AGPS, Canberra, 19-36.