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Framing Age

Contested Knowledge in Science and Politics

Edited by
Iris Loffeier, Benoît Majerus and Thibauld Moulaert

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Ageing populations have gradually become a major concern in many industrialised countries over the past fifty years, drawing the attention of both politics and science. The target of a raft of health and social policies, older people are often identified as a specific, and vulnerable, population. At the same time, ageing has become a specialisation in many disciplines – medicine, sociology, psychology, to name but three – and a discipline of its own: gerontology.

This book questions the framing of old age by focusing on the relationships between policy making and the production of knowledge. The first part explores how the meeting of scientific expertise and the politics of old age anchors the construction of both individual and collective relationships to the future. Part II brings to light the many ways in which issues relating to ageing can be instrumentalised and ideologised in several public debate arenas. Part III argues that scientific knowledge itself composes with objectivity, bringing ideologies of its own to the table, and looks at how this impacts discourse about ageing. In the final part, the contributors discuss how the frames can themselves be experienced at different levels of the division of labour, whether it is by people who work on them (legislators or scientists), by people working with them (professional carers) or by older people themselves.

Unpacking the political and moral dimensions of scientific research on ageing, this cutting-edge volume brings together a range of multidisciplinary, European perspectives, and will be of use to all those interested in old age and the social sciences.

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Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group
LONDON AND NEW YORK

First published 2017
by Routledge
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN

and by Routledge
711 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017

*Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group,
an informa business*

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British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
Names: Loffeier, Iris, 1983- editor. | Majerus, Benoãit, editor. | Moulaert, Thibauld, editor.
Title: Framing age: contested knowledge in science and politics / edited by Iris Loffeier, Benoãit Majerus and Thibauld Moulaert.
Other titles: Routledge studies in the sociology of health and illness.
Description: Abingdon, Oxon; New York, NY: Routledge, 2017. | Series: Routledge studies in the sociology of health and illness | Includes bibliographical references and index.
Identifiers: LCCN 2016055455
Subjects: | MESH: Aged | Sociological Factors | Public Policy | Aging | Europe Classification: LCC RA418 | NLM WT 30 | DDC 362.1—dc23
LC record available at https://lccn.loc.gov/2016055455

ISBN: 978-1-138-68383-9 (hbk)
ISBN: 978-1-315-54431-1 (ebk)

Typeset in Times New Roman
by codeMantra

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Introduction

Contested knowledge of ageing. Stepping out to frame the larger picture

Iris Loffeier, Benoît Majerus and Thibauld Moulaert

Since the mid-twentieth century the ageing population has gradually become a major political and scientific concern in most industrialised countries. Politically, welfare states' social and health policies target specific segments of the population such as 'elderly people', people with loss of autonomy, 'seniors' or older workers. At the same time, ageing has become a specialisation in many academic disciplines – medicine, sociology and psychology prominent among them – and it may yet become a specialised subfield in gerontology. From the perspective of knowledge studies, ageing provides a compelling case study in the 'regionalisation of knowledge' (Bernstein, 2000, p. 9): an area ('region') of knowledge that gathers discourses from many horizons and various disciplines. The contours of ageing as a region of knowledge were more or less defined over a century ago, alongside the invention of the terms gerontology (coined in 1903 by Elie Metchnikoff) and geriatrics, although the boundaries,[1] forms, and contents of knowledge production are still in flux today. This book's focus is investigating such a region not as a natural or given phenomenon, but rather as a space of contested knowledge production. It seeks to empirically question scientific, political and everyday framings of age by focusing on the relationships between the production of knowledge, its uses in policy making and daily experience, and the social actors who take part in such dialectics.

What boundaries does knowledge impose around age and ageing as public issues? How do older people and age-policy experts experience those boundaries? How does the focus on old age 'other' older adults? How is this otherness defined? What are the effects of such schemes of knowledge? What is at stake in the production of age-related frames, including those the social sciences help build? On what foundations are some of these boundaries based? Which debates do they feed and perpetuate? What do references to science mean, in practical terms? This volume sets out to answer these questions by bringing together research from Belgium, France, Germany, Luxembourg, Norway, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland. Contributing historians, sociologists, anthropologists and philosophers all focus on the core empirical elements that are at issue when the topic of ageing is addressed,

including the contributions scientific discourses make to frame-building. Twelve original chapters based on field or archival research offer insight into perceptions of ageing by showing what is highlighted and obscured by frames of ageing, and how such frames are (re)produced in a variety of ways and countries, at different scales of observation, and in a variety of discourses.

The book has three objectives. First, its focus arose from the observation of a double gap in social science research on ageing. For one thing, there is a dearth of research questioning the construction of a region of knowledge of ageing, and little recent work has unpacked its political and moral dimensions and impacts. As the example of 'alarmist demography', the concomitant fear of a 'decline' in population (Katz, 1992), and many chapters in this book demonstrate, the moral content of knowledge and discourses on ageing needs to be assessed. For another thing, research has largely ignored political, media and common uses of scientific knowledge, and has tended to analyse such uses more as coherent objects than polyphonic discourse (Ducrot, 1984). Media and political discourses on ageing are fuelled by the legitimacy of scientific discourse, while scientific discourses and research trends are partly shaped by public funding. Approaching the subject from different social sciences and countries, this volume intends to show that interactions between knowledge production and age policies are, among other things, strongly expressed through 'moral entrepreneurship' (Becker, 1966) and are built through direct and indirect exchanges between science and policy.

The second aim of this book is to expand the international perspective of ageing studies by acknowledging and moving past the Anglophone narrative in the field. Such a 'predominantly Anglo-American (UK–USA–Canada) emphasis' has already been identified in certain texts (Nikander, 2009, p. 650), but rarely remedied (Lamb, 2015). The ageing-studies literature about the United States is unquestionably rich, but too often conclusions for the US are transposed unchanged into European contexts, regardless of its very different chronologies and actors. The case of pension systems exemplifies such differences. The diversity of European welfare states involving numerous players – be it states as such or various semi-public institutions created after 1945, such as social security in France or the so-called 'Nordic model' – necessarily leads to structurally different settings and paths, as Esping-Andersen archetypically presented in *The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism* (1990).[2] A comparative and transnational approach makes it possible to elaborate an understanding of Europeanisation processes and highlight national and local differences. In this sense, bringing together researchers from various parts of Europe and assembling works from several language areas of the continent – although also 'overwhelmingly Western' (Troyanski, 2016, p. xv) in both global and European terms – seemed to be a reasonable first step towards meeting this international challenge. The result already makes valuable contributions without overly blurring specificities of

time and space. (Re)introducing European voices from a variety of countries and language areas will hopefully open the way for other epistemologies and scientific communities to join the reflexive debate.[3]

Third, this book can be understood as an epistemological attempt to situate knowledge of ageing. It is not part of what could be called ageing studies, but it does engage with it in many respects. But before developing this third aim any further, we should first give an overview of the central debates in the region of knowledge in which we as editors situate this volume.

Who talks about ageing?

A central but implicit issue in ageing research has been defining which disciplines are most legitimate for exploring the topic. Competing disciplines and specialists have been claiming to be the legitimate authority to 'talk about' ageing throughout the twentieth century and into the twenty-first. The medical and social sciences were probably the first sources of conflicting claims to being the legitimate voice of age studies. The medicalisation of ageing (Le Bihan & Mallon, 2014), which is one of the dominant critical master narratives of the twentieth century, appears to be part of the wider phenomenon of 'scientification of the social' (Raphael, 1996) in which social problems, formerly understood as political, come to be seen as scientific issues instead. Social scientists have accused the biological/medical lens of perceiving ageing as a process of senescence of the 'aged body' (Katz, 1996). That said, the medicalisation of ageing seems like a distinctly social-science discourse, therefore attesting to their early presence in the region of knowledge. In other words, the social sciences played a meaningful role in the struggle over age studies, having interests and 'ways of knowing' (Pickstone, 2001) of their own to defend, although their participation was uneven over time and from place to place.

Social sciences at the heart of the knowledge-region of ageing

While North American social scientists' claims on ageing emerged in the 1930s (Achenbaum, 1995) and more broadly during the Great Depression (Park, 2009), the starting point of such a struggle in France can be traced to the 1960s (Feller, 2005, p. 13) and 1970s, the period of the first oil crisis and strong attacks upon the welfare state (Rosanvallon, 1981). In Belgium, the call to study the social dimension of senescence beyond its medical aspects was made at the First Conference of the International Association of Gerontology, held in Liège in July 1950.[4]

Within the social sciences, both sociology of ageing in continental Europe (Hummel *et al.*, 2014; Van Dyk, 2015) and Anglo-American critical gerontology have taken a markedly ambivalent stand, positioning themselves simultaneously as active partners in the region of knowledge (notably by participating in defining and evaluating policies on ageing) and as external

and critical observers of this process. This tension between theory and practice seems to remain intractable and has led to the formula that there are two types of sociologist (Katz, 2014), the supposedly 'purist' academic/theoretical sociologist and the more result-oriented 'applied' sociologist. Their respective accusations of lacking proper scientific objectives and holding forth without empirical knowledge pressure everyone in the field to take sides.[5]

More broadly, other social science disciplines also claim the right to legitimately work on the topic, and perhaps with less disarray than in sociology. For instance, in France (and elsewhere, see Katz, 1992; Mottu-Weber, 1994) demography was a key player in getting old age labelled as a public problem, and it made several claims to ownership. Such claims occurred at different periods in different places, consequently affecting power relations between scientific disciplines within each country. From its inception in 1945 through the 1950s, the French Institut National d'Études Démographiques (National Institute of Demographic Studies, INED) was virtually the ideal-type of the nascent 'expertise' paradigm of the second half of the twentieth century (Delmas, 2011). INED asserted a scientific rationale to argue for the depolitisation of major socio-economic questions, without denying science the ability to intervene in policy. As Paul Paillat, a demographer working for INED, wrote in 1960 in *Population*, INED's journal: 'Our only aim is to supply rational policy with basic data' (p. 10). INED was nevertheless quite successful at taking control of age, because it was INED that framed the paradigms presented by the French Laroque Report. Published in 1962, it was the work of an official commission charged with exploring the issue of ageing in France. To this day, it is widely referred to as the first and foremost political attempt to assess ageing and define it with precision. In Germany, however, demography was partially discredited for the role population studies had played in National Socialism, and national leaders of the second half of the twentieth century could not approach anything resembling population control until the 1980s at the earliest (Overath, 2011).[6] Instead, social psychology took a very early interest in ageing issues in Germany, as evidenced by an early longitudinal study started in Bonn in the 1960s, the Bonner Gerontologische Längsschnittstudie (Gerontological longitudinal study from Bonn, BOLSA). One of the founding participants in the BOLSA study, psychologist Ursula Lehr, became a member of the German Parliament and served as federal Minister for the Family from 1989 to 1990.[7] In the social sciences, psycho-gerontological approaches gradually but unquestionably came to dominate the region.

These examples, further compounded by inclusion of economists' analyses of retirement, make it untenable to think that the social sciences were absent from the process of defining ageing: they have been central actors. Social science disciplines have been involved in the process of building, confirming and legitimating the category of old age. But the 'human sciences'[8] have played only a minor role, and are clearly latecomers to the vast field of ageing studies.

Contrasted disciplinary and epistemological traditions at stake

The major reason for this lesser engagement in the French and German human sciences is the prominence of the notion of social class in sociology and history since the 1960s, so the notions of age or generations did not resonate as paradigms (Mallon *et al.*, 2014, p. 12). This is notably evident in French sociological production of the second half of the twentieth century, in which, for instance, the schools of neither Pierre Bourdieu nor Alain Touraine produced major research on ageing,[9] with the noticeable exception of the works of Anne-Marie Guillemard. She is the only disciple of Alain Touraine – and was the only French sociologist for several decades – who showed a continued interest for the topic since her major seminal book, *La retraite: une mort sociale*, in 1972 and her later work on French public policy's role in producing ageing (Guillemard, 1980). Similar to Anglo-American gerontology's growing interest in actors and their experience beyond the analysis of structures and their effects (Phillipson, 1998), a new generation of sociologists has only slowly emerged since the 1990s. They have been showing less interest in the social production of ageing by public policy and more attention to the micro-production and experiences of ageing, through attention to the role of the couple during retirement (Caradec, 1996) or interactionist study of the experience of living in retirement homes (Mallon, 2004). Regardless, there are still no sociological journals devoted to ageing as an issue in France or Germany, although sociologists have been quite present as authors and board members of the French journals *Gérontologie et société* and *Retraite et Société*, and the German journals *Zeitschrift für Gerontologie und Geriatrie*. This is in stark contrast to publications focusing on identity markers such as class, gender and even other generational categories, such as youth.

The same can be said for history. The notion of generation was absent from historiography for quite some time. Starting in the 1970s, as social history developed in Europe, age slowly appeared as a category, first for youth (Heilbronner, 2008) and then old age. It was the dominant demography that initially got historians interested in generations, which they mainly used to reconstruct a demographic history of old age going back to the sixteenth century, where systematically structured archival records were available. Parallel to this interest, often contextualised in a long-term perspective, some historians focused on the more recent period, especially the last third of the nineteenth century and the first third of the twentieth century. They reconstructed the gradual development of the welfare state, paying particular attention to the expansion of pension systems, among other things. Generally speaking, this historiography painted a rather grim picture of what modernisation did to old age, a view that has been nuanced in the last 15 to 20 years. The cultural turn that also influenced historiography questioned the narrative of the 'golden age', showing that the introduction of class, race and gender into analyses of old age revealed

that the once seemingly homogeneous group of older people had in fact always been highly heterogeneous (Thane, 2003, p. 93; Blessing, 2010; Kampf, 2015). To this day, the historiography of ageing remains very fragmented and marginal within historical scholarship (Kampf, 2015).[10] Although there was a sudden fancy for the topic in the 1980s and 1990s that made it seem that the history of ageing might be a whole new domain for historical research (Mottu-Weber, 1994), such interest appears to have been short lived. Although there were a handful of such researchers in each country in the 2010s, it seems rather unrealistic to talk of 'humanistic gerontology'. Other than sociology, the human sciences of history and anthropology[11] thus far do not seem to have been able to establish an age-specific subfield or develop a common vocabulary through interdisciplinary journals or organisations.

Beyond the involvement of particular disciplines, research has focused on different interests over time and in different places. In Anglo-American critical gerontology, social policies and welfare (among other concepts) have been explored and built using 'moral economy', as seen in works of Phillipson (1982) and Walker (1981) in the United Kingdom, Estes (1979) and Minkler and Estes (1991) in the United States, and Myles (1984) in Canada.[12] This literature's general argument is that older people are excluded from social life and marginalised as a consequence of capitalism and its regulation. This 'political economy' perspective was joined by other emerging fields of knowledge like 'human gerontology' (Gubrium, 1993) and 'cultural studies' (Featherstone & Hepworth, 1989, 1990; Cole, 1992; Blaikie, 1999) to form 'critical gerontology'. Devoting more space to the agency of older adults and exploration of the effects of ageing's cultural dimensions from a historical perspective, these approaches are attentive to discourses, images and popular culture, and are particularly sensitive to diversity, paradoxes and individualism, opening new avenues for research. Inspired by Habermas and other scholars, attention to praxis (Moody, 1988, 1993) and the relationship between science and action (Dannefer *et al.*, 2008) has opened additional approaches[13] to this eclectic field of research. This eclecticism is visible in the dedicated *Journal of Aging Studies*. It has been also at the centre of reflection about the constitution of proper regions of research, whether it be gerontology itself (Achenbaum, 1995; Katz, 1996; Park, 2009) or sub- and side-categories such as critical gerontology or the more recent cultural gerontology.

Attempts to structure the field and recent claims to legitimacy

The structuring of this eclectic field is strongly connected to claims over what 'good' research on ageing should be. Such claims were one of the organising principles of the aforementioned literature about ageing, and they primarily appear in the debate over naming sub-disciplines that accompanies such work. Choice of the labels that the region of knowledge and its sub-fields should bear is connected to contrasting definitions of what 'ways of knowing' (Pickstone, 2001) and research communities they embrace.

Gerontology? While numerous publications have wondered if it should be considered an actual discipline (see, for example, Levine, 1981; Lowenstein, 2004) and related to 'the need for theory' (Biggs *et al.*, 2003) or perhaps be thought of as a profession instead (Hirschfield & Peterson, 1982), its diversity in methods and communities has been repeatedly put into question. Social gerontology? Critical gerontology? Cultural gerontology?[14] In the social sciences, the structure of interdisciplinary sub-categories of ageing is one of many sites of contested knowledge production. While Anglo-American social scientists have appropriated (and modified) the category of gerontology with the addition of qualifying prefixes, the Francophone social sciences (Moulaert, 2012) have almost completely rejected this label. This difference is also found in the degrees offered by university-level social science programmes: for instance, while David A. Peterson states that Master's degrees in gerontology are very common and similar in the United States (Peterson, 1984), Françoise Leborgne-Uguen and Simone Pennec (2012) show that in France, unlike Quebec and Brasil, ageing studies degree programmes make no reference to gerontology in either their names or curricula, and choose to refer to a variety of classic academic disciplines instead.

There are also differences among countries in the ways in which categories of knowledge are divided that can be seen as temporary outcomes of struggles over legitimacy. This essentially means that similar discourses, understood as belonging to different categories of knowledge, do not represent the same contexts, voices or degree of legitimacy, and so they cannot be assumed to convey identical contents and conceptions. Let alone the epistemological distance revealed in the uses and status of the work of certain theorists (especially Foucault), cultural studies, and 'French Theory' in diverse scientific communities on both sides of the Atlantic (Cusset, 2003) – and thus presumably around the world – despite the seeming similarity of references and associated vocabulary. This might nuance Troyanski's statement on the worldwide scientific uniformity of the region of ageing studies: 'It almost doesn't matter where the research is being done. The models are international. (…) [S]cholarly frameworks are globalized, and often the terms of the debate have their origins in the West' (Troyanski, 2016, p. 124). Even 'in the West', knowledges of ageing develop at different paces and with disparate contents. This is especially evident concerning language areas, but also occurs within national borders and communities (including scientific communities), as many chapters of this book illustrate.

Stepping out of ageing studies: A proposal for another structure of knowledge, non-regional and multi-disciplinary

This book brings together researchers whose practices are grounded in different but complementary disciplines. The wide-ranging chapters and disciplines each contribute pieces to an empirically grounded puzzle, respecting their classic disciplinary standards while stepping in some way out

of ageing studies. The guiding hypothesis is that ageing studies, as a region of knowledge, should first be thought of as a subject for analysis before being taken as an object to be defined. This makes it possible to focus on the forms, contents, structures and uses of knowledge, creating the potential for new knowledge on ageing that might not require new subdivisions of knowledge, further facilitated by at least temporarily stepping out of such a region of knowledge. This is not, however, to deny the value of ageing-studies publications that will be widely cited: the specificities of ageing must be studied and the relationship between action and knowledge taken into account. Our initiative is simply different in some respects, and hopefully complementary to ageing studies. In reference to critical gerontology's own original self-critique (Katz, 1996), we are gambling on the heuristics of researchers of different disciplines and topics joining forces. For one thing, we believe ageing studies benefits from the standard tools of anthropology, history, sociology and philosophy, not to mention their divisions of labour and the dialogue between them. Additionally, in contrast with 'critical-', 'social-' and 'cultural'-gerontology, providing an arena for dialogue for researchers who are not exclusively specialised in ageing opens the way for a novel grasp of its specificities while making a serious effort to answer the call for 'undisciplining old age' (Katz, 1996). We want to emphasise the fact that specialising research exclusively on ageing runs the risk of making ageing appear distinctive as a result of the division of labour in the field of knowledge production, rather than due to its actual specificities. Epistemologically, a specialised region of knowledge presupposes the phenomenon's specificities and takes them for granted. Methodologically, social studies of ageing are in most cases based on empirical enquiry conducted exclusively with older people, although comparative methods and tools are necessary to provide the basis for demonstrating specificities. Such choices limit the phenomenon to a pre-defined segment of the population, confirming epistemological specificities with methodologically induced ones. This is why we were particularly attentive to boundaries, to such an extent that the notion structures the book.

This book is organised in four parts, each addressing the social challenges associated with the boundaries of age as a region. Part I is devoted to demonstrating that the frame of old age fundamentally delimits the projected futures of societies as well as individuals. It probes what lies at the heart of the framing of ageing: agency over the future. Part II shows how framings of old age define and delimit groups and communities, fixing certain categories of otherness from numerous possibilities; 'older people' is the obvious one, but national and 'cultural' communities are also in play. In other words, Part II is about how the boundaries between categories unite and separate, defining multiple kinds of insiders and outsiders. Part III gets to the ties between 'the political' and science, assessing how their social foundations work together, from collaborative exchange through points of tension. It focuses on

the bridges and connections between each side of a boundary, in this case between science and 'the political'. Finally, Part IV stresses the actual actions that can appropriate and modify boundaries, how such boundaries are adjusted and experienced by actors at different levels. Like Part I, this last section starts with a chapter providing a macro-level analysis, then shifts to the meso-level, and concludes with insights on the micro-level.

Part I: The future at the heart of the region of ageing

Part I sheds light on how the intersection of expert knowledge and old-age policy influences the construction of both individual and collective relationships to future. Each in its own way, the three chapters illustrate that trying to glimpse and rationalise the future using simplified and recontextualised scientific discourses contributes to the construction of ageing as a public, political and individual problem. The section starts by setting the scene, introducing the frequent site where science and policy first encounter each other in the realm of ageing: demography, which is called upon even more than usual to shape the debate by bringing numbers to the table. Reinhard Messerschmidt (Chapter 1) radically unpacks the choices behind demographic projections and dissemination to analyse how they interact with media discourses. He shows how the media's recontextualisation of demographic discourses on ageing ultimately results in reducing it to the depiction of a distressing future. His conclusion illustrates how difficult it is for demography to present more nuanced proposals that would or could be widely circulated. At an intermediary level bridging society and the individual, Cécile Collinet and Matthieu Delalandre (Chapter 2) explore the ways in which prevention discourses relate individual life planning to the future of society in the promotion of physical activities for the not-yet-elderly. Their contribution painstakingly documents how national, European and international plans for prevention policy evoke complex scientific knowledge to further justify governance according to anticipated future trends. They show how such complexity is nonetheless simplified, as probabilistic relations become causal relations and uncertainty is transformed into strong statements. At the micro-level, Mark Schweda and Larissa Pfaller (Chapter 3) shed light on the entanglement of 'regimes of truth' and 'regimes of hope' in their description of how people use expert knowledge in anti-ageing medicine. Although expert knowledge tends to govern the relationship between the present and future under a regime of certainty, they show that even the most enthusiastic users of anti-ageing medicine accept the unknown space between their present lifestyle and the future to which it might lead. Rather than purely acritical belief, they observe and identify a series of connected and nuanced positions – with more subtlety than media and policies – that show how the future is actually something individuals also work on.

Part II: Defining boundaries, defining insiders and outsiders

Part II brings to light the many ways in which the category 'old age' defines communities and groups, not only within its boundaries but also beyond the targeted public. Its three chapters are informative on the ways this category can be instrumentalised and used ideologically as a rhetorical strategy in several arenas. Authors reveal how dwelling on supposed elderly misery (be it social, biological or both) paves the way for 'moral entrepreneurs' (Becker, 1966) and targeted ideologies that paradoxically weaken social bonds. Magnus Nilsson (Chapter 4) examines uses of the stereotype of the deserving old person as an ideological tool in nationalist discourse in several discursive arenas in Sweden (but with clear resonance for other European countries). Study of such discourses allowed him to clearly outline how nationalism can articulate with the welfare of older people, implicitly casting some kinds of people outside the borders of admitted European political communities. This not only occurs in public debate but also at the very heart of scientific concepts like the 'moral economy of ageing' (Kohli, 1991). Nilsson exposes the ideological character of the category of old age that defines both the people it refers to and 'the community, as such'. Alexandre Lambelet (Chapter 5), in his study of public discussion of sexual and suicide assistance in Switzerland, shows how labelling people as old and elderly also specifies activities. He analyses how the definition of 'the elderly' reframes what individuals do, adapting the terms of the debate to perceived needs and rights of older people that are inspired by particularly populist and miserabilist interpretations. Finally, Richard C. Keller (Chapter 6) continues these reflections in his analysis of 'the *canicule*' in France, the 2003 heat wave that lead to staggering death rates of elderly people, and the political shock wave that followed. He found that an increasingly strident discourse gradually framed the elderly of France as a population at the limits of citizenship and a burden for an emerging postindustrial nation. He notably shows how considering the aged body through a biological lens can justify exclusion of the 'frail' elderly from the social contract when their death, illnesses, difficulties or loneliness are understood as normal.

Part III: Bridges between science and policy

In Part III, three contributions further deepen this approach, showing that scientific knowledge itself is a compromise with objectivity and has ideologies of its own. The authors open the knowledge production field to prove that neither scientists nor their output are free from particular interests, ideologies or rhetoric. Beyond ideology, those chapters' depictions unveil the actual scientific activities that contribute to shaping frames of ageing, a scientific undertaking that is strongly connected to social work and evolving 'realities' of how knowledge of the elderly is partly produced for policy making. Pursuing the archaeology of knowledge, Nicole Kramer (Chapter 7)

explores gender and ageing issues by tracing the connections between elder care policies, scientific discourses and feminist claims. Using archival materials to track their historical contexts in careful detail, she provides clear insight on colluding or opposing interests that paradoxically appeared in discourses of similar content. Her analysis also documents how these different social arenas legitimise one another and how they are simultaneously mutually beneficial and competing in a struggle for legitimacy. Antía Pérez-Caramés (Chapter 8) unpacks the situation in Galicia – also known as the 'oldest region of Spain' – to stress the overlap of demographic knowledge and political orientations in relation to media discourses. Relations between 'alarmist demographers', the press and policy makers are revealing of how pro-natalist solutions become consensus and are promoted with minimal discussion despite the fact that they represent a complete political reversal. Her contribution also illustrates how alarmist demographic knowledge circulates between national borders, from France to Spain. Nicolas Belorgey (Chapter 9) presents the current instrument for assessing dependency in France (the AGGIR scale) resulting from geriatric medicine's political and strategic struggle for greater control over a period of over 20 years. Dissecting the AGGIR scale's internal operation and historical implementation, he shows that inventing the measurement process was not only about knowledge production on the part of geriatricians, but also about taking real political action and securing control over the domain for their profession.

Part IV: Experiencing, playing with, shifting boundaries

Frames are not only built, they are also experienced. Authors in Part IV illustrate how frames can be experienced at different levels of the division of labour, whether by people who build them (legislators and scientists), people using them (professional caregivers) or 'elderly people' themselves. Lucie Lechevalier Hurard and Benoît Eyraud (Chapter 10), examining the issues raised by the limitation of freedom of movement in elder care, portray the long-lasting challenges in setting the perimeters defining a category of elderly people to be specifically protected by law. They show that there is still no consensus over elderly people as a group in civil law, as the ideal balance between protection and stigmatisation remains elusive or even impossible. They demonstrate how boundary-making nonetheless had a pivotal moment in the 2000s concerning elderly people with Alzheimer's disease or dementia. Without a firm legal consensus on the elderly in civil law, specific soft law has been providing the only possible answer by setting boundaries within the category instead. This chapter illustrates how difficult the issue of boundaries has been for those in charge of formally delimiting them. Although the category of elderly people seems to be self-evident and well established, this chapter shows how wide the actual gap is between representations of old age and how it is institutionalised in law. Jingyue Xing and Solène Billaud (Chapter 11) present how colleagues from two distinct

professional backgrounds in France (nursing and social work) build their own shared expertise and approach to autonomy assessment. They describe how they manipulate apparently rigid frames when evaluating the needs of elderly people living at home. Their meso-level findings serve as a call for greater attention to the role of intermediate professions – street-level bureaucrats – in charge of public policies. Last, Aske Juul Lassen (Chapter 12) provides a more micro-level analysis with the observation of specific situations and very usefully enhances the definition of the concept of 'technologies'. He explores elderly people's leisure activities through the frame of active ageing policies, revealing how far they are from expert definitions. Some older billiards players do not see themselves as active agers, despite the fact that their practices unexpectedly fall into the institutional frame of active ageing, the existence of which they acknowledge and work to transform. The three last chapters seem to be a final reminder that a specific kind of social activity always accompanies frames: play with the very boundaries they impose.

Notes

1 We also use Basil Bernstein's metaphor of the boundary, which relates to classification. Classification is the very activity that creates categories, categories of knowledge among them. Boundaries separate categories from one another (as 'insulation', in Bernstein's terms) and are maintained, reinforced or weakened by power relations and struggles – that is, by their social basis (Bernstein, 2000, p. 99). In this sense, regions are a type of category of knowledge, as are academic disciplines, and boundaries are what separate, for instance, sociology from psychology, 'the elderly' from 'young people', etc.

2 His model was also critically revised to include Southern European welfare states (Ferrera, 1996) and take better account of gender issues (Lewis, 1992). From a similar international perspective, Guillemard (2010) shows how the place of older people in employment (at work, retired or going into early retirement) varied according to the welfare state, relations between the parties involved and cultures of ageing.

3 Publishing such work in English is part of a more general position on research and its language of expression. As continental European researchers, we argue that there is need for national-language-based scientific publishing. But we also strongly advocate for the sharing of local ways of practising research and locally situated results in English to contribute to global heuristics.

4 Reports of the first international conference on gerontology, Liège, 10–12 July 1950, *Revue médicale de Liège,* V(20); http://digitalassets.lib.berkeley.edu/irle/ucb/text/lb001454.pdf, accessed 26 December 2016.

5 So far very few scholars have attempted to bridge the alleged 'gap'. Such distinctions also exist in other disciplines, such as among geriatricians; see Belorgey's chapter in this volume.

6 A feature that links Germany and Spain (see Messerschmidt & Pérez-Caramés in this volume).

7 For further reading: Birren, James E., and J.J.F. Schroots. 'The History of Geropsychology'. In *Handbook of the Psychology of Aging*, edited by James E. Birren and K.W. Schaie, 5th ed., 3–28. San Diego: Academia Press, 2001; and Birren, J.E., and J.J.F. Schroots, eds. *A History of Geropsychology in Autobiography.* Washington: American Psychological Association, 2000.

8 A term in common use in Europe referring to disciplines addressing the biological, social and cultural aspects of human existence, including sociology, anthropology, history and philosophy.

9 Rémi Lenoir, a disciple of Pierre Bourdieu, briefly worked on the topic at the end of the 1970s before changing orientation.

10 In contrast to youth studies, which even has its own journal in France: *Revue d'histoire de l'enfance 'irrégulière'* (*Journal of the History of 'Irregular' Childhood*).

11 This despite the creation of an international Association for Anthropology and Gerontology in 1978, and the recognition of ageing as 'an explicit topic of anthropological research' in the 1970s (Degnen, 2015, p. 106).

12 Anne-Marie Guillemard's work could also be considered close to such a perspective, despite being more concerned with the sociology of public ageing-related policies rather than social gerontology.

13 This specific effort to connect research and action also motivated Phillipson and Walker's original call for 'critical gerontology' removed from the 'mainstream' (1987).

14 The example of the recent handbook on the subject of 'cultural gerontology' (Twigg & Martin, 2015a, 2015b), embracing broad fields of knowledge from the social sciences and humanities, can be read as a new attempt to impose a categorical structure on a field of knowledge, with a claim of legitimacy as its starting point.

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